

LONDON SOCIETY.

SEPTEMBER, 1869.



ELIZA AT THE COTTAGE WINDOW.—See 'M. or N.'

MR. HARDCastle's FRIENDLY ATTENTIONS, AND WHAT CAME OF THEM.

CHAPTER I.

BEWILDERMENT AT BRIGHTON.

IF the gentleman who found the lady's glove at the ball of the—th Dragoon Guards at Brighton on Wednesday last will be at the Zoological Gardens in London on Sunday next, he may hear of something to his advantage.

VOL. XVI.—NO. XXIII.

The 'Southdown Reporter and Devil's Dyke Free Press,' in which the above advertisement was contained, fell from the hands of a gentleman who was reading that enterprising print in the coffee-room of an hotel in the town first

referred to—the Sybarite Hotel, facing the sea. I suppose it was the advertisement that caused the surprise, not to say emotion, which evidently possessed him. It could not be the attack upon the Mayor, nor the denunciation of the Town Council, nor the exposure of the Gas Company, nor the clever article upon the dearth of local amusements, nor the pleasant reference to 'Our Autumn Visitors,' nor the eulogistic review of 'Our talented fellow-townsman' volume of poems, nor even the facetious letters about ladies' bonnets and high-heeled boots. Yes, it must have been the advertisement.

There is one thing that a man is sure to do when an announcement in a newspaper exercises upon him such an effect that he drops the newspaper upon the floor. The odds are at least Lombard Street to a China orange that he picks the newspaper up and reads the announcement again. The gentleman in question adopted this inevitable course of action; and while he is engaged in mastering the interesting paragraph, and making his reflections thereupon, I will tell you who he was and all I knew about him up to this period of his career.

You could see for yourself, as he sat in the bow-window in the twilight, with the broad sheet spread before him, that he was a gentleman, in the conventional sense of the term; that he was well-made, manly-looking fellow of unmistakably military cut, with a leisurely expression of countenance suggestive of the fact that he need be in no hurry to assert his good looks, as they were sufficient to assert themselves; and if he kept curling that long tawny moustache round his thumb and finger you might be sure that it was an action caused by nervous anxiety rather than by any thought of improving that appendage. If you guessed his age to be somewhere between twenty and thirty you would not be mistaken; and if you made a bet that he was the Hon. Harry Doncaster, brother to Lord St. Leger, and a captain of light dragoons on leave from India, you

would win your bet beyond all chance of dispute.

But you would never suppose, unless you happened to know, what a troubled life Harry Doncaster was leading. Money had never been the strong point of his family, at least during the last two generations. His brother the Viscount had not much, and what he had he wanted—for viscounts must have money, of course, come what may. His family set Harry up in the cavalry—he took a great deal of setting up, by the way, though he got his promotion by luck—and he inherited some private means from his mother. But in reference to the latter he made the not uncommon mistake of confounding capital with income; and the original sum, after several abortive settlements in life, refused at last to be made the sport of an unscrupulous cheque-book, and disappeared indignantly below the financial horizon. After this pecuniary crisis Harry Doncaster, as far as any additions to his pay were concerned, was supported, like the hospitals, by voluntary contributions. But the voluntary system was no substitute for an establishment in his case; and in a thorough state of disendowment, without edifices, globes, or any consolation of the kind, he found himself in a state which he described as 'dependent on the generosity of my family, who refuse to give me anything.' Then he began to borrow, which was crisis the second in his career. He began by merely overrawing with his agents; and Cox, it must be said for that obliging firm, allowed him a considerable fling. But there is a point when even Cox loses patience; and Harry Doncaster, when he found his pay looking very small in perspective, compared with the massive foreground of liability, did not relish the effect of the picture, and squared up with Cox by a great convulsive effort. It was then that he took to borrowing in a direct manner, and came to crisis the second, as I have said. Now crisis the second would not much matter; but it is very apt to lead to crisis

the third, when borrowing becomes so difficult as to approach the confines of impossibility. And to this gloomy boundary, I regret to say, Harry Doncaster had arrived at the period in question. He did not know, as he declared, how to turn himself round, and performed the process only, like the scorpion girt by financial fire, the circle narrowing with every successive sun. He began serious borrowing in India—that gorgeous land which has the fatal gift of credit in a bewildering degree—and where the trail of the serpent (of high interest) extends from the rice-fields of Bengal to the rose-gardens of Cashmere. He had a few debts in England at the time. He thought they would not matter; but they did. And he soon found that the process which follows non-payment in the one country is much the same as the process which follows non-payment in the other; the principal difference being that in India you are arrested by a bailiff in a looser pair of trousers. On coming home upon leave he made another discovery—that Eastern impecuniosity is a tree of hardy growth, and will bear transplanting to the West with considerable success. It was with a profound conviction of this important truth that he began serious borrowing in his native land; and for a time his native land treated him with her well-known liberality in the way of advances, and equally well-known consideration with regard to their return. But there is a time for all things, and that for payment comes with remarkable punctuality, and when it really means business is apt to be a difficult customer. This is just what Harry Doncaster is beginning to discover when we find him at the Brighton hotel conning over the advertisement. He has exhausted worlds of leave, and will have to imagine new if he wants much more of it. But he dares not return to his regiment under present circumstances, and remaining in England seems equally out of the question. He has an idea that the interior of Africa would be a proper part of the world for his

future sojourn; but a recent event has made him reluctant to turn his back upon the land of his youth; and the latter feeling, I fancy, has some connection with the advertisement.

Were I to follow the example of many misguided novelists I should represent Harry Doncaster, at this juncture, as soliloquizing aloud, and giving a summary of his past life and present prospects, with a statement of the nature of the question which occupies his attention, for the benefit of anybody who might happen to be listening. But people never do this in real life; and, confining myself to facts, I shall simply mention that a few muttered words escape him to this effect,—

‘ Must be meant for me — will risk it — can’t come to any grief on a Sunday.’

And with the newspaper still in his hand he rises, with the intention of making for the fireplace, by the side of which is the only bell-handle he happens to call to mind, though there are half a dozen about the room. But he pauses in the act, for there is a stranger sitting with his back to the bell-handle, finishing his dinner in a leisurely manner; and it is evident that Harry Doncaster cannot get to the bell without disturbing the stranger. The two have been taking their respective repasts a few paces apart. Each has been well aware of the presence of the other, but each has ignored the other’s existence, as in conventional duty bound — a very proper arrangement, by the way, in a public room, which ought to be a private room to anybody who pleases to make it so.

Having an object in so doing, Harry Doncaster considers himself warranted in addressing the stranger, which he does by asking him to ring the bell.

There are various ways of asking a man to ring a bell, and Harry’s, upon this occasion, was a little unceremonious — unintentionally so. But the stranger obeyed the mandate, and had evidently no intention of ordering the other stranger’s carriage, as the superb gentleman who

invented Brighton did with Mr. Brammall under similar circumstances; for before the waiter could obey the summons he remarked to Captain Doncaster—

‘It is not the first time that I have obeyed your orders.’

‘Indeed,’ said Harry; ‘I don’t remember that you have served with me.’

‘No, but I have served things for you at Harrow; don’t you remember your fag, Jack Shorncliffe?’

‘Of course I do, and I am very glad to see you again, but should not have known you, you’re so altered.’ Mr. Shorncliffe, as he now appeared, was a person of small stature, particularly neatly and compactly built, with a face that was particularly neat and compact also, and the same character belonged to his hirsute adornments. He had a very keen eye, and was very decided in speech and manner.

‘Well, you don’t expect me to look such a fool as I was then,’ said he. ‘I knew you at once; saw you the night before last at the Plungers’ ball, but couldn’t speak to you—always with some girl.’

‘You mean *you* were.’

‘Yes, of course; *you* seemed to be mooning about doing nothing.’

‘And what are you doing yourself, in another sense? You were going into the service, but I never heard of you, or noticed your name in Hart.’

‘No; the paternity changed his mind about me. He made the discovery that at least nine out of ten of our immediate family who have gone into the army have punctually come to grief, and are at the present time head over ears in debt.’

Harry could not deny that there are officers of the army in such a predicament.

‘So he put me in his bank instead, where I am a partner—awfully rich—want a few hundreds, eh?’

Harry started at the question—jestingly put as it was—for he was by no means used to such pleasant inquiries. For a moment he felt a fiendish temptation, but he restrained himself. The thing would never do, at any rate it would be premature at the present time. Mr.

Shorncliffe abruptly returned to the subject of the ball.

‘I saw who you were looking after there, the unknown enchantress with the pompous papa. Did you find out who they were? I couldn’t. Governor must be an alderman, I suspect: they came from London, that was all I could pick up.’

Harry Doncaster looked a little confused, but he, answered carelessly—

‘Ah! I know the people you mean, but I did not find out their names. Of course I admired the lady, like everybody else.’

‘Superb creature,’ pursued Mr. Shorncliffe. ‘It would be invidious to particularise where all is perfection, as puffing critics say in the papers; but I think her great points are her eyes and shoulders—it would be difficult to say which are the brightest of the two.’

Harry Doncaster pretended to laugh at this criticism, but did not half like it. Jack Shorncliffe proceeded—

‘I suspect her eyes are too blue to be very bright by day; but there is no mistake about her shoulders. Alabaster is a ridiculous comparison. There are no complexions like alabaster, and I should be very sorry if there were; her shoulders are simply like ivory, and the elephant tribe ought to be much obliged to me for the comparison.’

Harry was getting angry by this time, but he refrained from any manifestation which might betray his secret (you know as well as I do that he *had* a secret), or, still worse, make him appear ridiculous. The subject of conversation, too, was pleasant to him upon any terms, so he allowed Shorncliffe to proceed.

‘I should like very much to know who found her glove,’ pursued that gentleman. ‘I know that she lost one, for a man who saw her leaving the ball said she turned round to look for it while stepping into her carriage, and that the governor said, “Oh, it doesn’t matter, you are close at home.” You have seen the advertisement in the paper, of course? Ah! you have the paper in your hand.’

Harry Doncaster, at the commencement of this colloquy, had taken his seat at Shorncliffe's table, and had brought the 'South Down Reporter and Devil's Dyke Free Press' with him, for the simple reason that he did not think of laying it down. However, there was no betrayal involved, and Harry simply said that he had seen the advertisement, adding, what was strictly true, that he was as much mystified by it as his companion.

But I am sorry to say that the matter did not end here. The two gentlemen spent the evening together, as well as that process could be performed in the absence of private engagements; that is to say, they walked out upon the new pier, and returned at ten o'clock or so to the hotel, where they were both staying. During their walk the conversation had not fallen upon the lady of the lost glove, but it did so when they returned, and Jack Shorncliffe, growing confidential, avowed himself an ardent admirer of the lady, whose acquaintance, he said, he was determined to make. The family lived in London, he knew, and if nobody would introduce him he would introduce himself. He was possessed, he added, of 'a genial audacity which might be mistaken for cheek,' that never failed in such cases. This was not at all pleasant to Harry Doncaster; but he could not help remembering that one stranger has as much right to be in love with a lady as another stranger. When, however, Jack Shorncliffe grew bold over his not unqualified seltzer, and began to express his admiration in a similar strain to that in which he had previously indulged, Harry remonstrated, somewhat to the speaker's astonishment—

'Why, the lady is nothing to you?' said Shorncliffe, inquiringly.

'I am not sure,' replied Harry. And then, I regret to say, he was weak enough to own the state of his own feelings, and, what was worse, to acknowledge himself as the finder of the glove, which article he produced from his breast-pocket in proof of the assertion.

Mr. Shorncliffe was very far from relishing this revelation, and the

pair presently found one another's society not quite so pleasant as it had been before. They discovered, in fact, that sitting up was a bore, and determined to go to bed. Harry Doncaster was the first to leave. He did not go to bed, but went out for another walk by the sea.

When he returned to his room he felt in the breast-pocket of his coat, remembering that it would not be well for its contents to come under the notice of his servant in the morning.

The glove was gone!

CHAPTER II.

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

Sunday at the Zoological. The season is drawing to a close, but the day is one of the fullest that there has been since its beginning. Everybody is there; but that is not saying enough. There are all the necessary nobodies to keep the everybodies in countenance, and save them from staring at one another like idiots. There is even a Royal Prince and a Royal Princess, and these illustrious personages actually seem to like being present, for nobody bores them with intrusive attentions.

The day is one of the finest as well as one of the fullest of the season, and the one fact, I suppose, accounts considerably for the other. It has doubtless influenced the toilettes, which are lighter and airier than ever, as far as the ladies are concerned; and what wonderful coiffures these same ladies wear! Coiffures seem to reach their culminating point at the Zoological; go anywhere afterwards and you always notice a declension.

There is nothing to do, of course, at the Zoological after you have been to see some of your favourite animals. There are always a few of these in fashion, and you 'do' these rigorously. This object accomplished, you concentrate your attention upon trying to get chairs, a pleasing pursuit which passes away an hour very well. As everybody tries to get chairs, I suppose they

are the unsuccessful candidates who walk about; and it is well that somebody should so disport themselves, otherwise sitting would be comparatively dull work.

An elderly gentleman, to whom I wish to call your attention, has been foraging for seats ever since he entered the gardens. He has not regarded the chase, like more philosophical persons, as an incidental piece of amusement, and has been actually out of temper at the delay. But see, he has at last brought down his game, and comes upon the grass with a chair in each hand; and his satisfaction is complete when, on joining two ladies who form his party, he finds that one of them has found a seat for herself. As he also is thus saved from standing you might suppose that he would begin to be amiable. But he does nothing of the kind. He dislikes the place and the people also, and, as he says, doesn't care who knows it. A more insane way of passing the afternoon he cannot conceive, and he expresses his dissatisfaction in audible terms. He is a portly person with a pink face, dressed scrupulously in black, with a white cravat of a previous period of society, and a big diamond brooch in the bosom of his shirt which 'would buy half Northumberlee,' if half Northumberlee happened to be for sale. Both his pink face and his portliness are appearances in his favour. Neither is too pronounced, and both draw that nice line between prosperity and apoplexy which one always rejoices to see in elderly gentlemen.

Of the two ladies one is evidently his wife and the other apparently his daughter.

His wife is tall, stately, and reserved; grandly rather than gaily dressed, like many courtly persons of her period in life whom one meets in the exclusive circles of Madame Tussaud—persons whose manners have considerably more than the repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere; for so little influenced are they by vulgar emotion that a condescending inclination of the head, or a haughty turn of that appendage upon their aristocratic shoulders are all the signs they

deign to make of taking the smallest interest in their fellow-creatures. The lady in question has evidently modelled herself upon one of these courtly dames. You can see at a glance that her ideas of good-breeding are entirely of a negative character; and without overhearing any family conversations you may be sure that she tells her daughter not to do this and not to do that, because great people never do anything of the kind, neglecting, of course, to add what it is that great people *do* do, and in what respects the nature of their activity differs from that of little people.

Her daughter, ah! her daughter is very different. You have heard some account of her in the artless criticism of Mr. Shorncliffe; for—there need be no mystery in the matter—she is indeed the unknown enchantress of the Plungers' ball! But Mr. Shorncliffe, with all his enthusiasm and powers of description, did nothing like justice to her loveliness, which in its general character was like that of a lolling lily, if you can fancy a lolling lily with an aggressive abundance of chestnut hair and eyes the colour of the corn-flower. She has, as Mr. Shorncliffe observed, an ivory delicacy of surface; but that gentleman forgot to mention the pale coral tints that gave it relief. I am bound to admit also, on my own account, that I have never beheld a lily, lolling or otherwise, arrayed to such purpose in pale blue. It was Solomon in all his glory and the lily combined.

But it will save trouble to tell you at once who these people are.

Mr. Surbiton is principally known for having made a great deal of money. It is a very good reputation to have, and will carry its subject a considerable way into society. It is not quite understood how the money had been made, except, I suppose, by Mr. Surbiton's old and more immediate friends; but he is supposed to have begun in a very small way and ended in a very large way, and being now retired he is of course in no way at all. But do not suppose that people in general care in what particular line of business the money had been made, and

very few would trouble themselves on the subject but for Mrs. Surbiton's horror at any hint of her husband having been in trade, which makes her friends laugh occasionally, and of course tends to keep the fact before their eyes. Two-thirds of her life, I should think, are passed in trying to conceal what she considers this family disgrace, and, as far as any degree of success is concerned, she might as well proclaim it periodically from the house-topa. Her main object at the present time is to effect an aristocratic alliance with her daughter. That young lady, by the way, is happily uninfluenced by the peculiarities of her parents. Being no more than seventeen or eighteen years of age, she is not able to remember the humbler state of the family, and having been educated away from home she is unaffected by any of its traditions.

Scarcely have Mr. and Mrs. Surbiton and their daughter taken possession of their chairs than they are joined by a gentleman, a stranger, who addresses himself to the head of the family in a manner indicative of some special errand.

But I must here leave them to note a scene which is enacting in another part of the gardens.

Harry Doncaster has been two or three times up and down that long walk where the walkers seem to congregate for the amusement of the people in chairs. He has performed the process with some impatience, having an object in view apart from being stared at. But his glances right and left are evidently not rewarded by the sight of some persons of whom he seems to be in quest, and after mingling for a few minutes with the crowd on the grass he turns away as if for the purpose of being alone. His mood is plainly not a pleasant one, and he seems preoccupied to an extent incompatible with enjoyment of the Zoological. So he sits under a tree and has an interview with himself—a very unsatisfactory interview, I should say, judging from his frowns and occasional ejaculations. It would end in a violent

quarrel, I have no doubt, but for a diversion caused by the appearance of a stranger.

Harry Doncaster, being rather slender in figure than otherwise, did not occupy the entire seven or eight feet of the bench upon which he had chosen to rest; so the stranger availed himself of the vacant accommodation. This stranger was one of the most agreeable persons you ever beheld. He was not a fat man, but he was certainly a plump man, with a beaming, radiant presence, confirmed by his face, which was so happy and healthy, smiling and benevolent, as to be irresistibly attractive. A sanguine complexion and sandy hair may have had something to do with the prevailing effect, but the genial nature of the stranger shone especially in his eyes.

Harry Doncaster, preoccupied though he was, could not avoid notice of these characteristics; so when the stranger spoke to him he did not resent the intrusion, but showed himself to be favourably impressed.

'You do not remember me, Captain Doncaster?' said the stranger.

Captain Doncaster could not dispute the proposition. The stranger continued—

'No doubt you do not; you were a small boy when we used to meet. But I was well acquainted with your father, the late viscount—was, I may say, his friend, and had the pleasure of obliging him in many ways. Always happy to do it, too, having the greatest respect for him and his family. Besides, it's always better to make friends than enemies, and every man has it in his power to do some good in his generation if he only has his heart in the right place.'

Harry Doncaster was charmed to hear such generous sentiments, and professed some hereditary gratitude for the services rendered to his father, not that he knew their nature, but he guessed that they might have been of a pecuniary character.

'You do remember my name, I dare say,' pursued his obliging neighbour—'Matthew Hardcastle.'

Harry Doncaster thought he re-

membered it—was not sure—yes, he certainly—it seemed familiar to him—he must have heard it at home when he was young.

'Ah! I thought you had not forgotten my name, at any rate,' said Mr. Hardcastle, with a pleasant chuckle; 'and now let me tell you why I have recalled myself to your recollection. Frankly, I wish to render you a service. There is too little sympathy in this world between man and man; we ought all to do more for one another than we do; the curse of the world is selfishness.'

'My dear sir,' said Harry Doncaster, 'it is charming to hear you express such noble sentiments, but I am not aware in what manner you can do me a service. I am full of troubles, but they are of a nature very difficult to provide for, and a stranger—'

'Not a stranger,' interrupted Mr. Hardcastle, taking Harry's hand and grasping it with much warmth; 'say a friend. It is indeed in my power to render you a service, and fortunately it is not necessary to test my friendliness by any sacrifice on my own part. The service I am able to render you will cost me nothing. On the contrary, I shall be a gainer by conferring an obligation in another quarter, not a pecuniary obligation of course. What I mean is that I shall gain the lasting gratitude of the family of one of my oldest friends, and that is payment to me enough. Nobody ever said that Matt Hardcastle ever did a good action only for money, though that perhaps is no merit of mine. I don't know what I might have done had I been poor, and we must always be charitable to the errors of needy men. Happily I have always been beyond the reach of temptation.'

'You puzzle me,' said Captain Doncaster, who thought that his new friend would indeed be a clever fellow if he could do anything for him. But he remembered that he had read of equally wonderful things in the 'Arabian Nights' Entertainments.'

'Now, let me be frank with you,' Mr. Hardcastle continued. 'I know

your position at the present moment to be one of great embarrassment. I know that you have for years past spent a great deal more than your income. You have had expectations, doubtless, and were justified in so doing; but these expectations have not been realised as yet, and you have no time to wait for them. I know that besides a—if I may so call it—somewhat reckless personal expenditure, pardonable in a young man of family belonging to an expensive regiment, you have been unfortunate in horses and have dropped a little at cards. You have met debts of honour by contracting legal obligations. There are some of them considerably over due, and unless—in the immortal words of our friend Micawber—"something turns up" for you, you may be considered in the light of a ruined man.'

Harry was obliged to own that this was but too faithful a picture of his state and prospects in life; but he expressed some surprise that Mr. Hardcastle should have arrived at so accurate a knowledge of his condition.

'Never mind how I came to know it,' said that gentleman in his most genial manner; 'I know a great many things about a great many people that they little suspect. The fact is that I have rather a speciality for doing friendly offices for people in my humble way, and such cases reach my ears sooner than they reach those of most men. Now there is only one way of extricating yourself from your difficulties, and that one way is—marriage.'

Harry Doncaster was deeply disappointed at the nature of the remedy proposed. As if he had never thought of it before! Why, it is the first idea that occurs to every spendthrift who is hard pressed. Harry did not avow this contemptuous opinion, however, but contented himself with saying—

'I am much obliged, my dear sir, for your suggestion, and I must confess it had occurred to me before. But there has always been this difficulty in the way. I have a prejudice against marrying a woman I don't like, and I have hitherto been unable to combine the neces-

gary conditions. 'When I have liked, or fancied that I have liked, a girl, she has always turned out to be without a penny, and richer than myself only through having no debts. On the other hand, women with fortunes sufficiently large to enable them to take me, debts and all, have always been objectionable persons one way or another, besides being mostly cads. Indeed, women in my own rank of life are not to be had under the conditions, and I have never found any with money enough whom I cared even to ask. I am not very particular about grade, but in any grade I have always met with the same difficulty. As for selling myself entirely for the benefit of my creditors, I have not quite arrived at that pitch of heroism. Of the two I prefer the creditors to the kind of wife I could get—they may ruin me, but they cannot force me to suffer my ruin in their society.'

'But if I could introduce you to a lady whom you would be sure to like?'

'Thank you very much, my dear sir,' rejoined Harry Doncaster, somewhat decidedly, and getting rather red in the face, 'I have reasons, at the present time, for not being prepared to make the experiment.'

'An attachment already formed, eh? Excuse me—I am an older man than you—for asking the question. It is so, I see by your face. No doubt it does you honour, and so do all the sentiments you have expressed. It is something strange to meet with the finer feelings in a man who has passed through your career. But supposing that I could assist you with the object of your choice?'

'My dear sir, I have not told you that I have any choice, and I repeat—'

'Now, my dear friend, don't make a stranger of me, who only wish to oblige you. It is just possible that your choice—or shall I call it your fancy?—is but a few days old.'

'You are certainly determined, Mr. Hardcastle, to know as much as I know myself.'

'It is not improbable that you never yet spoke to the lady?'

'Mr. Hardcastle, I——'

'That you do not even know her name?'

'You are most determined in your interrogatories.'

'That you never saw her but once—at a ball?'

'Well, you evidently know something about it,' said Harry Doncaster, his first instinct of resentment appeased as he found his obliging friend really as well informed as he pretended to be.

'Supposing, then, as I have said, I could introduce you to the lady in question?'

'You would indeed please me, but I know not to what it could lead. To tell you the truth, I came here on purpose to see her; but even had I seen her I should scarcely have ventured to introduce myself, for I have no right to suppose that either she or her family desired to meet me, and the only excuse I had for intruding I have somehow lost.'

'You have lost the glove, then?'

'And you know about the glove?'

'Yes. I agree with you that they were not likely to advertise for such a very unimportant article, and it would certainly be strange if they advertised for you.'

'That is just what occurred to me. And you have seen the advertisement too?'

'Well, I have heard about it. But you won't want the glove if I present you myself.'

Harry Doncaster could not withstand the temptation; and in a few minutes the pair were in the midst of the promenaders, and peering in every direction among the occupants of the much-coveted chairs.

* * * * *

I left the Surbiton party taking their rest, and being joined by a stranger. You may guess who it was—Mr. Shorncliffe, of course.

Mr. Shorncliffe rushed in where Captain Doncaster feared to tread; but he considered himself the lesser fool of the two on that account, and I suppose he was in the right.

Lifting his hat with a half recognition of the ladies, this enterprising gentleman addressed himself to Mr. Surbiton, who rose from

his seat with a certain air of deference; for Mr. Shorncliffe's manners were imposing—to Mr. Surbiton, at any rate.

'I have taken the liberty of intruding upon you here,' said Mr. Shorncliffe, with composed audacity, 'in obedience to your hint.'

'My hint, sir,' replied Mr. Surbiton, surprised out of politeness. 'What do you mean?'

'Mean, sir! Is it possible that you have forgotten the Plungers—the Dragoon Guards' ball at Brighton, and the advertisement in the "South Down Reporter"? I am the finder of the glove.'

The latter communication was conveyed in a low, confidential tone, as if it bore the weight of a state secret. Poor Mr. Surbiton was sorely perplexed. As soon as he could find words to reply, he said—

'Ball! Yes, I remember the ball, and a very dull affair it was. But what the deuce you mean by the advertisement and the glove I can't say. You must take me for somebody else, or have gone clean out of your senses.'

And here the horrible idea seized upon Mr. Surbiton that he had to do with a lunatic of a dangerous kind; so, with a precautionary instinct as creditable to him as his promptitude of action, he seized the chair upon which he had been sitting, covered himself with it, and covered the ladies with it, while awaiting a further demonstration on the other side.

The attitude was so unusual at the Zoological as to attract the attention of several bystanders; but they were well-bred persons, and did not precipitate a scene. The ladies, if not alarmed, felt very awkwardly placed, and Mrs. Surbiton told her husband in quiet, but commanding tones, to resume his seat, and hear what the gentleman had to say.

'I can assure you, sir,' continued Mr. Shorncliffe, rather amused than otherwise, and speaking round the chair for the benefit of the ladies, 'that I am not a madman, but am most pleasantly in my senses, and that I have intruded myself upon

you simply because I supposed you desired my presence.'

The explanation seemed at least reasonable, so Mr. Surbiton was persuaded to drop his defence and take his seat upon it—a pacific movement which satisfied the bystanders that there was nothing the matter; so they moved off, and an apparently promising scandal was nipped in the bud.

'The gentleman will tell you, I dare say, if you ask him,' said Mrs. Surbiton severely to her husband, 'what he means by the advertisement.'

'Well, what do you mean?' said Mr. Surbiton, sulkily.

'I mean the announcement which appeared on Friday in the "Southdown Reporter,"' said Mr. Shorncliffe, taking from his pocket the paragraph in question, which he had taken the precaution to cut out.

Mr. Surbiton read the advertisement with amazement; then he handed it to Mrs. Surbiton, who read it and looked scandalized; then Mrs. Surbiton handed it to Miss Surbiton, who read it—and laughed.

The latter lady was the first to express her views on the subject.

'If it relates to us, mamma, it must be intended as a piece of fun—though not such fun as a friend would practise upon us. I certainly dropped one of my gloves as we were going out; but nobody could suppose that we should advertise for such a thing as that; and I, at any rate, saw nobody pick it up.'

'I had that honour,' said Mr. Shorncliffe, not quite so assuredly as before, and addressing himself still to Mr. Surbiton, though with reference to the young lady, 'and seeing the advertisement, I was naturally under the impression that—that—there was a desire to communicate with me.'

'Then your impression was mistaken,' said Mr. Surbiton, recovering his self-possession as he began to understand the question at issue. 'We know nothing about the advertisement here; somebody has been making a fool of you.'

Mr. Shorncliffe began to think that he had at least been making a fool of himself, and sincerely wished that he had left Doncaster to perform his legitimate part in the affair.

'Shall I at least perform the commission which I have so innocently undertaken, and restore—'

Mrs. Surbiton here interposed, and stopped the movement which the speaker was making towards his pocket.

'On no account—such a proceeding could not be permitted in public—with the eyes of the world upon us—and nobody here requires the glove.'

'If the gentleman had found the little ring I lost the same evening I should be obliged to him,' said Miss Surbiton.

But Mr. Shorncliffe had unfortunately not found a ring.

'At least,' said that gentleman, as he made a movement to depart, 'I hope that I shall be acquitted of having taken a part in what seems to be a very silly hoax. My name—which I dare say is not unknown to Mr. Surbiton—should be some guarantee of my honourable motives.'

And here Mr. Shorncliffe handed his card to the gentleman whom he addressed. The latter glanced at it, and his manner changed immediately.

'Bless me!—Mr. John Shorncliffe! Are you of the house of Grampus, Shorncliffe, and Co., of Lombard Street?'

'I am a partner in that firm.'

'My bankers. Then you are at least a respectable person. My dear sir, I am very glad to see you. This business of the advertisement is evidently a mistake—some foolery of those military coxcombs. I am very sorry that you have been imposed on. Grampus, Shorncliffe, and Co.—first-rate house—know some of the partners. You don't know me, I dare say.'

'Your name, I have no doubt, is known to me,' replied Mr. Shorncliffe, with renewed confidence at the turn which the conversation had taken.

'My name is Surbiton, sir. Do

you know me now? I have had an account at your bank—and, I flatter myself, never an unsatisfactory balance—for the last twenty years.'

'There is no name I know better—none more honoured in the firm—than yours. I am proud to make your acquaintance, Mr. Surbiton.'

'And I am proud to make yours; though I must confess I thought at first you were a swindler. Nevermind—mistakes will happen. And now I know who you are let me introduce you to my wife and daughter.'

The wife and daughter duly acknowledged the introduction—neither of them, however, with any unnecessary graciousness; for Mrs. Surbiton, now that her husband had retired, 'did not approve of people in business,' and Miss Surbiton did not find herself taking much interest in the person upon short notice. However, Shorncliffe had gained his point, and, attaching himself sagaciously to the quarter where he had made an impression, he talked 'City' to Mr. Surbiton with such success as to fairly win that gentleman's heart.

The afternoon, which was young when they entered the gardens, had been middle-aged for some time past, and now showed signs of growing old. On every side people were seeking social safety in flight. Chairs—that sure test of the Zoological market—which had been so lately at a high premium, were now at a miserable discount. There had been no transactions in seats indeed, except in leaving them, for the last half-hour, and those comforting securities exhibited not only a downward tendency, but a rapid state of decline. I am indebted for this playful metaphor to Mr. Shorncliffe, who employed it in his conversation with Mr. Surbiton with such effect as to make that gentleman regard him as the most witty person he had ever met in the whole course of his life. Mrs. Surbiton, whose sympathies were wedded to the West-End, scarcely disguised her disgust at this kind of pleasantry; while Miss Surbiton, with whom the West-End was an open question, had a very small opinion of the wit, for the young-

lady-like reason that she did not care about the individual.

'And now, my boy,'—it was my boy by this time—said Mr. Surbiton to his new acquaintance, 'you are leaving this place of course. Which way are you going? Westward, of course—everybody goes westward. Take a seat in our carriage. You have your own? Never mind—may as well drive with us—just room—tell your man to follow—take my wife out like a good fellow.'

So Mr. Shorcliffe gave his escort to Mrs. Surbiton, and Mr. Surbiton followed with his daughter.

It was at this juncture that Mr. Matthew Hardcastle and Captain the Hon. Harry Doncaster encountered the party—just in time to be too late.

Harry was disgusted at the perfidy of his friend.

'Never mind,' said his genial companion; 'they have not seen us, and we shall have plenty of time to give him checkmate to-morrow. If we do not castle his queen—Hardcastle his queen I may say, ha! ha! ha!—never believe me again.'

CHAPTER III.

RIDING, DINING, AND LOVE-MAKING.

Mr. Hardcastle, who was a bachelor—all these genial old boys are bachelors—occupied one of the best suites of chambers in the Albany—I will call it A 1, which it was in all respects but its local classification. Thither Captain Doncaster went to breakfast with him on the Monday morning succeeding the Sunday afternoon at the Zoological; and breakfast concluded, the pair arranged their plans for the coming campaign. These were not very elaborate, being limited to paying a visit at Mr. Surbiton's house, and enabling Harry to make what way he could with the ladies.

'There is no occasion,' remarked Mr. Hardcastle, 'to make the attack look premeditated, and that is why I proposed to introduce you in a public place; but nothing can be

more natural than that I—an old ally of the family—should take a friend with me when I happen to call; and I should say nothing if I were you about the advertisement in the paper, which is not likely to have come from the Surbitons, and is most probably some joke concocted at Brighton with which they have nothing to do.'

There was no end to the friendly attentions of Mr. Hardcastle. He suggested that, as they had nothing else to do after breakfast, they should have a ride in the Row; and when he found that Harry had no horse in town, he said it didn't matter, he could mount him, and he did so in a most satisfactory manner, and told Harry always to consider the horse at his disposal as long as he remained in London. Harry was anxious, too, about another point. He told Mr. Hardcastle that he did not feel safe in such a public place as the Park, where he had not been for months; but his new friend told him to be quite easy on that score. 'If anything happens,' said he, 'I will settle the thing for you; it is only for a short time that you need incur the danger. I hope very soon to see you a free man—now, no thanks—I assure you I take a selfish pleasure in obliging anybody to whom I take a liking—it is my way.'

The first person they met in the Row was a gentleman who was also fond of friendly attentions—a gentleman in humble life who followed a pursuit not unknown in the neighbourhood—that of warning persons in Harry's predicament, with a view to half-crowns, of enemies being in the vicinity. He gave an intimation of the kind to Harry, which made that gentleman wince, especially when he heard that the enemy in question had 'walked off with a swell only on Saturday, while he was riding with a lady.' But Mr. Hardcastle treated the matter so lightly, and renewed his assurances of support with such evident sincerity, that Harry was soon reassured, and felt almost as free as he did on what Fielding calls 'that happy day of the week when profane hands are forbidden to con-

taminate the shoulders of the unfortunate.'

The next person they met was Miss Surbiton herself. She came upon Harry Doncaster like a vision —only I doubt if any vision ever sat a horse half so well, or managed it with such ease and grace. A vision, I fancy, would ride more in the style of the lady in the picture advertisement, who sits sideways upon an agreeably rearing steed, holding the reins as if they were the handle of a tea-cup, while the skirt of her habit, which is about twelve feet long, meanders gracefully among the animal's legs. This was not Miss Surbiton's style you may be sure, or Harry would not have gone into such absurd raptures about her equestrian performance. He had never, too, he thought, seen anybody who looked half so well in a riding dress, though it is perhaps the *safest* costume for all styles of beauty, and most styles which are not beauty for that matter.

Mr. Surbiton, who accompanied his daughter, could not ride, but he did. He pulled up upon seeing Mr. Hardcastle, and the two immediately entered into conversation upon some sordid business in which they were both concerned. Meanwhile the younger pair, having no social licence to talk, felt rather in the way, until Mr. Hardcastle presently introduced his companion, and the rest was plain sailing. The party first rode abreast, and then in pairs, and after a canter or two together Harry Doncaster and Blanche Surbiton found themselves intimate friends.

Three days afterwards Captain Doncaster dined with Mr. and Mrs. Surbiton at their house in Hyde Park Gardens. Mr. Surbiton did not much care about asking him, but Mrs. Surbiton did, which was decisive. That lady never neglected an opportunity to cultivate fashionable and well-connected acquaintances—they were such a relief, she said, from her husband's horrible City friends—and she treated the latest on the list with great distinction, as being no more than the

due of a person who was a possible viscount—the present one being childless—and who might—the lady had already great ideas in the way of an alliance for her daughter.

Among the guests bidden to the hospitable board of Mr. Surbiton was Mr. Shorncliffe. Harry Doncaster and he had not met since the memorable night at Brighton, and had their meeting now taken place been elsewhere, Harry would have quarrelled with him, for he could not doubt the means by which that gentleman had made the acquaintance of the Surbitons. It was clear that he must have dropped the glove in the coffee-room, and that Mr. Shorncliffe must have appropriated it. However, the house they were in was no place in which to settle a question of the kind; and having once let it pass, Harry thought he would say no more about it, contenting himself with the amiable revenge of making Mr. Shorncliffe particularly uncomfortable by taking no notice of him, and leaving him uncertain what kind of greeting he had to expect until the evening was well-nigh over.

Harry Doncaster indeed was far better employed; for he had Blanche Surbiton in charge at dinner, and enjoyed the lion's share of her society afterwards. Shorncliffe was powerless to interfere with this monopoly during the meal, for although placed opposite to the lady, there was a bar between them in the shape of a senseless contrivance of fruit and flowers, which, as he said afterwards, was all very well in its way, but a bore beyond bearing when it got in the way of one's observation. He could quite sympathise with the Frenchman who said that he detested the beauties of nature; and he hated the scent of roses as much as did Hood's flower-girl who associated them with so much sorrow. The object who filled his thoughts was almost shut out from his vision by these wretched representatives of grace and beauty. It was only, indeed, by a dive of a most undignified character that he could manage to address his *vis-à-vis*, and I need

scarcely say that a remark across a dinner-table must be of a special character not always at command to warrant a process of the kind. From his proper position the young banker could obtain nothing more satisfactory than the sight of a bit of blue *corsage*—blue was evidently Miss Surbiton's colour—and the glimpse of an occasional arm. This was the more exasperating as he was able to see and hear quite enough to know that Harry Doncaster was making his way in a triumphant manner, and thoroughly engrossing the girl's attention; while those more happily seated could place but one interpretation upon the manner in which, as she listened to or addressed her neighbour, the pink coral continually combated with the ivory of her complexion.

Poor Shorncliffe, too, had the additional mortification of being placed next to Miss Mankillen—a lady of undecided age but decided manners, arrayed for fascination in a style which ought to amount to conspiracy in law; who had no features to speak of, and thought therefore that her force lay in expression; who said the smallest things with the largest emphasis, and whenever she talked—which she always did—twisted her face into maniacal grimaces, and gave to her too agile form the contortions of mermaid. She was called, indeed, the mermaid among the more ribald and insulting of her acquaintances; and one of these noticing the manner in which she was disporting herself towards Mr. Shorncliffe, remarked that if she carried her looking-glass and comb into connubial life, she would certainly give the most faithful reflection to her husband's least pleasant qualities, and comb his hair in a manner not contemplated by *coiffeurs*.

The neighbour tried to enter into her ideas of a pleasant conversation, but found himself so entirely opposed as to the required conditions that he contented himself at last by answering her at random; so they talked something in this manner—

‘You go everywhere, Mr. Shorn-

cliffe. I have seen you at five hundred places this season.’

‘No, I think she is best in the “*Grande Duchesse*.”’

‘You are fond of dancing? I know you are.’

‘I prefer Patti of the two.’

‘Those are very beautiful flowers. I adore flowers.’

‘I hear that his last novel is a failure.’

‘Are you going to the Zoological next Sunday?’

‘Yes. I heard her twice at Vienna before she came here.’

And so forth. But the worst of it—for Mr. Shorncliffe—was that the lady did not feel offended, but came to the conclusion that her neighbour was a little deaf, and that it was a well-bred thing to humour him.

It was a desperately long dinner; for Mr. Surbiton inclined to massive hospitalities, and thought there could never be enough of a good thing. But it came to an end, as even desperately long dinners must do; and when the ladies had all sailed out of the room—like a fleet of flowers—the gentlemen did what gentlemen always do on such occasions—took a little more wine, and tried to bring together the scattered elements of conversation. As for Harry Doncaster, he seemed, for the first time, aware of their presence—so engrossed had he been with his fair neighbour, who was not only by this time mistress of his heart, but of his head also; for his brain had gained new life from her beauty, and his fancies were exhilarated as if fresh from a feast of the gods. Mr. Hardcastle, who was on the other side of the table, nodded to him as he touched his glass with his lips, and his looks said as plainly as looks can say, ‘I congratulate you.’

Shorncliffe was first in the drawing-room, and when Doncaster entered that apartment he found him engaged in conversation with Miss Surbiton, and pretending to take tea. To what extent he would have succeeded in interesting the young lady I cannot say; for he was cruelly treated shortly afterwards by his host, who drew him

away to ask his opinion upon some important question connected with the City. Harry took the opportunity to slip into the vacant chair, and was once more master of the situation.

How they got there—by what pretence—and at whose suggestion—I know not; but in a few minutes the pair were miles away (drawing-room measure) in the conservatory.

There was no one near; and you may be sure that both were conscious of the fact. Miss Surbiton, indeed, so far appreciated it as to take the opportunity of asking a question which she would not have liked to ask with a chance of being heard.

'Pray excuse me, Captain Doncaster, for asking you; but where did you get that little turquoise ring you wear on your watch-guard?'

'Originally,' answered Harry, 'by the prosaic process of buying it, if I remember rightly; but how I came by it lately is more than I can tell. I thought I had given it away years ago. It seems, however, that I have been wearing it, for some little time, at least, next to my heart, for my servant found it in the side pocket of a coat. How it came there is a mystery to me, but I remembered it as being my former property.'

'You were at the Dragoon Guards' ball at Brighton last week—I know you were—I saw you there. It was there that I lost the ring. It must have come off with my glove, which I dropped going out.'

A light broke in upon Harry Doncaster.

'I was an idiot,' said he, 'not to have connected the two circumstances before. It was I who found the glove. You were in the carriage, and had driven off before I could return it.'

'You found the glove? I thought it was Mr. Shorncliffe. He brought it back very unnecessarily, and made a great fuss about it at the Zoological Gardens on Sunday. He was a stranger to us then, though it seems that papa banks with him.'

'The fact is, I lost the glove by accident, and Mr. Shorncliffe appropriated it; but the ring, which I had not observed, was not then in it, and must have fallen out previously, and remained where I originally placed the glove. I ought to have quarrelled with Mr. Shorncliffe for his share in the proceeding, but have determined to forgive him in consideration of the temptation. His object was to use the glove for the purpose of getting an introduction to its owner.'

The pink coral gained a decided advantage over the ivory as Harry said these words.

'I consider his conduct highly impudent,' said the lady; 'but it does not alter my opinion of him, for I did not like it from the first.'

'I will at any rate restore the ring,' said Harry, disengaging it from his chain, and placing it in its owner's hand.

Blanche Surbiton looked curiously at her companion as she received the ornament.

'Have you any recollection,' she asked, quietly, 'of the person to whom you gave it so long ago?'

'I remember her perfectly as she was then; but it is ten years since—just before I went into the service and to India—and she was then a little girl. Can it be that—'

And Harry paused to examine the possibility which suggested itself.

'She was a child of seven or eight years of age, and you gave the ring to her upon the beach at Brighton,' said Miss Surbiton, decidedly. 'She had ventured out a little too far, looking for seaweed, and had stayed upon a piece of rock until the tide—then coming in—surrounded her. She was in great danger, for she was too frightened to help herself. You were walking upon the beach at the time, waded through the surf, and carried her on shore. She was nearly fainting—you were very kind to her—revived and soothed her—and ultimately gave her back to her servant, who had been talking to a soldier and came up at the last moment. On leaving the child you placed this little ring upon her

finger, and she has always worn it since in remembrance of her deliverer.'

'I remember every incident you mention,' said Harry; 'and now that you bring the child to my mind I can recall her face in your own. But time makes great changes in young ladies who are not grown up.'

And here Harry Doncaster made an obvious remark or two about the influence of time being sometimes of a favourable character, which brought the pink coral to the surface again. Then he asked a question in his turn—

'Did you recognize me?'

'Immediately. At the ball I thought your face familiar to me, and soon remembered where we had met. You have changed very little—scarcely at all, indeed.'

Harry did not ask—and I dare say did not care—whether the tendency in his case had been favourable or otherwise; and the lady was not sufficiently gushing to volunteer the information. That the discovery of their old acquaintance gave pleasure to them both was easy to be seen; and when Mr. Shorncliffe—by the merest accident, of course—came presently into the conservatory, even that very assured gentleman arrived at the conviction that he was no welcome addition to the party.

CHAPTER IV.

WHOM SHALL SHE MARRY?

'But how can I, as a man of honour, misrepresent my position, and conceal the fact of all these awful debts?'

Harry Doncaster asked this question of Mr. Hardcastle at breakfast next morning in the Albany, where, by the special desire of the occupier of A 1, the young officer had taken up his temporary quarters.

'As for your want of property—which will not be always a want, for you must have *some* one of these days, even if your brother marries, and you do not get the title and estates—I don't see that you need

feel any embarrassment. Nothing can be more fair than a match of the kind. There is birth and position on the one side, there is money on the other. The Surbiton family, I am sure, will be charmed with the alliance. Your debts are awkward, of course; but a great many of them are of a kind which no man ought to pay in full if he can avoid it. If you will authorise me to arrange with the rascals, I will undertake to manage them, to make a compromise as to amount, and give you time besides; and moreover, I will explain the whole matter to Mr. Surbiton, who has the highest regard for me as a friend and a man of business, and will, I am sure, act upon my advice.'

Harry was enchanted at the idea of such a satisfactory settlement, and threw his scruples to the winds. Mr. Hardcastle's generous proffers touched him to the heart; it would be foolish and ungrateful to refuse them. The result was that Harry placed himself entirely in the hands of his new friend, and thought how happy the world might be if friends of the kind were more common.

Released from sordid cares, Harry Doncaster could venture to declare his love. Indeed, to tell the truth, he had gone a great way in that direction on the previous evening while in the conservatory, and he was in no want of an opportunity for meeting Blanche Surbiton again, for he had learned that she intended to ride in the Row that morning, accompanied only, servant excepted, by Miss Mankillen. So Harry, mounted as before by Mr. Hardcastle, went into the Row also, and there the two met, quite by accident of course, and Miss Mankillen, not being the kind of person to ride with a lady if she could get a man instead, did not trouble them long with her company, a fact upon which I suspect Blanche Surbiton had calculated when she asked her to go.

Harry and Blanche—you will excuse my familiarity with the young lady—after seeing Miss Mankillen inflict herself upon a nervous gentleman who was riding for his health, and was too weak to make resist-



Drawn by Adelaide Claxton.]

MR. HARDCastle's FRIENDLY ATTENTIONS.

[See the Story.]

ance, took a canter together, which had the effect of leaving everybody behind, and then walked their horses and begin to talk as people do when they have a great deal to say and know not how soon they may be disturbed. It was Harry who took the initiative in this decided course of action, and resuming the conversation from the point at which it had broken off in the conservatory, made such rapid progress that he arrived at the 'momentous question' with a celerity that surprised himself, to say nothing of his companion. However, he had not mistaken his ground, that was clear, and before anybody came up to talk to them, Harry had not only extracted as favourable an answer as a lady is likely to give who is agitated and has a horse to manage, but extorted a confession that for ten years past the childish fancy that mingled with her gratitude had been a sunny memory of her life, which had been lit up with the hope of meeting its object once more. So when they rejoined Miss Mankillen, or rather when Miss Mankillen rejoined them, they both looked so happy as to be decided objects of suspicion; indeed the pink coral in Blanche's face was sufficient evidence for conviction in any court of justice.

That afternoon, when Mr. Surbiton returned home—although retired from business he haunted the City upon various pretences—Mrs. Surbiton made to him an important communication—that Captain the Hon. Harry Doncaster had made an offer for their daughter's hand. Mr. Surbiton's answer, I am sorry to say, was coarse. He said 'Rubbish.' But it was not rubbish for all that, and Mrs. Surbiton assured him that the match was one of which she highly approved, the connection was so good, and would give them such an influential place in society, especially if her daughter should become a viscountess, of which there seemed every chance. The lady, in fact, was for accepting at once, and, what was more, celebrating the marriage as soon as possible, to prevent accidents.

But Mr. Surbiton, strange to say,

VOL. XVI.—NO. XCIII.

did not seem to see the advantage, especially compared with another offer which had been made to him in the City for the hand of the same young lady. This, it appeared, was from no less a person than Mr. Shorncliffe, who had formally asked for his consent in the event of his obtaining that of the lady. The worthy gentleman respectfully, but firmly, avowed his preference for the monied suitor. 'What is rank to us?' he said; 'I am a self-made man, and everybody knows it. With the money I can give to Blanche, and that which Shorncliffe has, their position will be second to nobody's. We don't want empty handles to names, and to be hanging on to poor, proud families that will scarcely own us. I like to have the sinews of war that I have always relied on, not the gold lace and the gloss, that nobody cares about if they can get the other thing.' Mrs. Surbiton could not conceal her disgust at this commercial view of the question, and intimated to her husband, though in more polite and prosaic phrase, that however he might, on account of his wealth, have inherited some of the flowers of a social Eden, the trail of the City was over them all, and that she was ashamed of his mean way of looking at the position.

The position, indeed, was a very awkward one, for the harmony of the family, between whose heads nothing could more confidently be expected than a right royal row. But Mr. Surbiton had a fortunate preference for peace and quietness, and an idea occurred to him.

'I tell you what it is, my dear,' said he; 'it is of no use for us to quarrel about this business. People are never good judges of their own affairs. It is always better that they should take counsel's opinion, and I know of no man whose opinion I would rather take than that of Hardcastle. I have known him for these thirty years; he has always been my friend, and I have always found his advice put money in my pocket, and if by following it I have put some into his own, that is only fair. He is a clear-headed man of the world, and I promise you, if you

agree, that I will be guided by his decision.'

Mrs. Surbiton did not directly make her election; but on the following morning, after a careful consideration of Mr. Hardcastle's character, and the peculiar circumstances of the case—the lady had considerable shrewdness and penetration, and saw into character rather more deeply than her husband—she consented to the compact, reserving to herself mentally the right of playing false if the decision went against her. It was a reservation which I cannot defend, but I am only recording facts, and perhaps I have no right to expose the aberrations of so respectable a lady. So Mr. Hardcastle was bidden to a private dinner, and the two gentlemen had a long discussion on the subject after the ladies had gone up stairs.

The result may be soon told. Mr. Surbiton put the case to his friend as one in which it was impossible for them to have a difference of opinion, and he made it a question, he added, only for the sake of peace and quietness, that is to say, to please his wife. Mr. Hardcastle at first seemed to agree with him entirely, and then proceeded to urge, with an adroitness for which he was remarkable, a long series of qualifications, the upshot of which was that he ranged himself unreservedly upon the side of the wife, and advised his old and valued friend so strongly in favour of the Doncaster alliance that the old and valued friend was fairly carried off his feet. Mr. Hardcastle said a great deal about the young lady's preference, of which he was well aware, and the duty of parents—he was solemn and pathetic upon this subject—to forward the happiness of their children irrespective of sordid considerations. Mr. Surbiton, although an affectionate father in his own way, was not greatly impressed by these arguments; but when Mr. Hardcastle dwelt upon the advantage given to capital by connection, and showed how, for the highest aspirations of finance, social position was indispensable, Mr. Surbiton was visibly moved. And finally, remembering

how he had for thirty years followed his old and valued friend's advice with advantage—which advice he could not consider otherwise than disinterested, though the old and valued friend had always made something by it himself—he decided to take it in the present instance.

'But the young man has no money,' (Shorncliffe had told him that,) urged Mr. Surbiton, as a last appeal; 'and he has debts.'

'That is quite true,' replied Mr. Hardcastle, in his most smiling manner, and treating the question as if it were a mere bagatelle. 'But you cannot give your daughter less than twenty thousand pounds down, whoever marries her, besides the fortune you leave her in your will; and that will be sufficient for them—and his pay is something remember—until he comes into money of his own, even if he does not get the title and estates, which he will in all probability. As for his debts they are not very serious, and I shall be able to arrange for them. Leave that matter in my hands. I should add, by the way, that the twenty thousand pounds ought to be unfettered—and I really think that the alliance is cheap at the price.'

So Mr. Surbiton yielded, and the only uncomfortable feeling that he had when he rose from the table was the triumph that his compliance would give to his wife. He felt small, in fact, as a family man.

The marriage of Captain the Hon. Harry Doncaster with Blanche, daughter of John Surbiton, Esq., was duly celebrated at St. George's, Hanover Square. It was announced in the papers as a marriage in high life, and already the Surbitons felt themselves a part of the peerage.

CHAPTER V.

AFTER THE HONEYMOON.

Never did bride and bridegroom return from their wedding tour more happy than did Harry and Blanche. It was then that their troubles were destined to begin.

A country seat of the viscount's

had been placed at their disposal until they made arrangements of their own; and on the third morning after their arrival, when they were seated at breakfast envying nobody in the world, a letter arrived from Harry's solicitor. It announced that his creditors had all proceeded against him to the utmost extremity—to executions, in fact, in every case, for the full amount of the several debts, and that he must immediately pay a sum of something over nineteen thousand pounds.

I need not say how hard the blow was to bear. But it was certainly harder when they learned that Mr. Hardcastle, the disinterested ally of Harry, and the old and valued friend of Mr. Surbiton, held all Harry's bills, and indeed every debt that the young officer had incurred—obligations which that friend of humanity had been able to buy up, at a time when Harry's fortunes looked desperate, at a remarkably low figure. There was no help for it now. Harry had twenty thousand pounds—just a little dipped into—by right of his wife, and had to pay every farthing.

I need not say what Mr. Surbiton said; indeed I should be sorry to repeat his language, even in a Latin note. The old and valued friend had been too much for him after all, and had made a profit of, I dare say, nine-tenths of the nineteen thousand pounds by the transaction. I need not say either what the viscount said, and how he threatened to marry, and, as Harry had already lost so much, cut him off from all compensatory prospects. I need only record actual events. Mr. Surbiton would not give another farthing, though, to do him justice, he did not talk about altering his will; so there was nothing for it—as far as Harry was concerned—but to accommodate himself to his new condition of life. He sold his commission in the first place—realising its full value, as there were no claims upon him—and with the sum thus obtained, he was able to go into the country and live in a quiet way while waiting for happier

times. His only consolation was in the devotion of his wife. Blanche did not care at all for their loss of the great world, and she made their little world perhaps pleasanter than it would have been had it been great. She would rather, she continually declared—and she was a very veracious young lady—be the wife of Harry without a sixpence, than have accepted Mr. Shorncliffe's offer with all its substantial advantages. And as events turned out, it appeared that she would have been justified, even financially, in her choice; for a commercial crisis came, and Mr. Shorncliffe's bank broke, and left that gentleman considerably worse off than Harry himself. It was particularly unlucky, too, that by the breaking of the great house of Grampus, Shorncliffe, and Co., Mr. Surbiton lost another great slice of his splendid fortune. In fact, he came down greatly in the world, and had to remove from Hyde Park Gardens to the comparative obscurity of Notting Hill. This was a great source of satisfaction to Mr. Hardcastle, who moralised a great deal upon his friend's incautious disposition of his money, and claimed to have been his benefactor to the extent of twenty thousand pounds by having saved that sum out of the fire. 'It would all have gone,' said that disinterested gentleman, 'if I had left it in his hands; he never had a knowledge of business, and all the money he made I made for him. But human nature is frail, and even my old friend Surbiton is ungrateful.'

Mrs. Surbiton still had things her own way with her husband. His losses, she maintained, were all caused by his trusting to those commercial people; and, after all, the Doncaster alliance gave them dignity even in their reduced circumstances. Her husband did not see it; but he had learned the wisdom of silence when his wife pronounced. Mr. Shorncliffe, it should be recorded, was equal to the occasion. After casting about for a little time, he cast himself into the arms of Miss Mankillen, who was very much obliged to him, and

repaired his shattered fortunes with her money, of which she had a considerable amount. It must be said for that lady that she was not mercenary, and had an abstract reverence for a man. I have not heard whether she makes the prophesied use of the mirror and the comb; but it is certain that Mr. Shorncliffe has lost the audacity which formerly distinguished him, and is a sadder, if not a wiser man.

As for Harry and Blanche, they vegetated for a considerable time, until expectations began to be realisations; and, at last, the title and estate—the latter not large but sufficient for their dignity—came to them, and then they began to live again. They were very happy throughout their troubles, and are

very happy now. They are not proud, and they delight in nothing more than to talk about their impecunious days. Harry, who is an hereditary legislator, is taking to politics, and it will be hard if his wife's social influence, and beauty combined, do not get him at least an under-secretaryship of state one of these days. Meanwhile, they are so contented, that, while carefully cutting him off from their acquaintance, they feel a secret sentiment of gratitude towards Mr. Hardcastle; for, after all, they say, it was he who brought them together by putting the advertisement into the 'South Down Reporter,' and luring Harry into the pleasant meshes of matrimony.

SIDNEY L. BLANCHARD.

LIGHT-HEADED SOVEREIGNS.

NOT real kings and queens, emperors and empresses, czars and czarinas, sultans and sultanas; not wanderers like George of Hanover, Otto of Greece, Bomba of Naples, or Isabella of Spain. We do not mean these. Our thoughts are bent rather towards those metallic sovereigns on which the royal countenance is simply a *bas-relief*, and which we reverence with a very peculiar sensitiveness. The sovereigns here under consideration are nearly always light-headed; nay, their lightness affects them all over, on both surfaces and round the edge. William IV. is lighter-headed than Victoria, and still lighter is George IV., not through any peculiarity of mental constitution, but on account of a longer career in this world; and if we happen to catch sight of one of the old guineas which our grandfathers paid and received, we should find the effigy of George III. very light-headed indeed. The truth is, that all kinds of coin, whether of gold, silver, copper, or bronze, are constantly wearing away. Hard and durable as it may seem, every coin loses something of its weight on every occasion of using. The old illustration about drops of water wearing away a block of gra-

nite is applicable by analogy here. Every time we drop a sovereign into a purse or a pocket, or ring it on a counter, or put it in a till, or tie it up in a bag; every time that it is transposed from one hand to another (hard or soft), even without touching anything else, it loses a few of its particles. Small they may be and unquestionably are, too small and too few to be visible; but still they are veritable particles. Never mind if it be only the hundredth, thousandth, millionth of a grain, it tells up in time.

‘Mony littil mak a mickle’ in this as in other matters. Every time of using rubs off some of the metal from every coin. Where it goes to—‘goodness knows.’ It must be in the air, in the water, on the ground, about our persons, on our clothes, in rooms and on furniture, in drawers and on counters. Nothing (we know from the modern teachings of science) is really lost or destroyed; the gold does not cease to be gold merely because it is in excessively minute particles; but certainly it ceases to be gold *to us*. Nobody knows even what becomes of all the pins, the steel pens, the cigar-ends which we throw away when done with; and still less do we know the

fate of those morsels which result from friction or rubbing.

This wear and tear of a good golden sovereign leads to some very curious calculations at the Mint. We mean a *good* sovereign, rascallities of all kinds being supposed absent. Professor Jevons, a learned man on these subjects, estimates that there are about eighty million sovereigns (including an equivalent for half-sovereigns) now circulating in the United Kingdom; and other authorities have arrived by other modes of investigation at a similar result. Now these sovereigns wear away with singular regularity. Very few of them are *hoarded*; for nearly all classes are now conversant with the fact that it is better to invest than to hoard, better to have money out at interest than idle in a box or an old stocking; and thus most gold coins go through about an equal amount of hard work. A sovereign of good sterling gold remains legally current until it has lost three-quarters of a grain in weight, after which time it becomes 'light,' in which state any one may refuse to take it; and so proportionately of the half-sovereign. Now it is found that a sovereign generally becomes 'light' in about eighteen years, and a half-sovereign in ten years: the difference being due to the fact that the *surface* of a half-sovereign is much more than half that of a sovereign, and is therefore exposed to proportionately harder usage. From this we may draw a safe kind of conclusion, that if a sovereign above eighteen years old be proffered to us in payment, we should act prudently in testing its weight. If we *now* receive one of these gold coins that was minted before the year of the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park, there is more than an even chance of its being light, however good in quality.

It comes to this, then, that sovereigns ought to be called in, remelted, and recoined every eighteen years and half-sovereigns every ten years. It is supposed that the eighty millions sterling of gold coin are made up of sixty-eight million sovereigns and twenty-four million half-sovereigns. Taking these pro-

portions, and taking the two periods of time in which the two denominations of coin become 'light,' our Mint doctors tell us how much recoinage there ought to be annually to get rid of the light-weights as soon as they become light: the annual average would be about three millions and three-quarters of sovereigns and two millions and a half of half-sovereigns. If a sovereign is set to work on the 1st of January it becomes lessened in value by the 31st of December to the extent of one-third of farthing. A trifle certainly; but when we consider that nearly all the brother sovereigns are working away at the same rate during the same time, we shall see that the aggregate of trifles assumes a form very much like thirty thousand pounds sterling. This is a remarkable instance of unintentional and unavoidable waste. The particles of gold disappear, no one knows whither. In all the ways just mentioned the infinitesimally-minute morsels make their escape, never more (so far as we can see) to be re-collected. Doubtless we eat gold, drink gold, wear gold, and walk upon gold, just in the same way as we eat dust, drink dust, wear dust, and walk upon dust, and through the effect of the same processes of abrasion and disintegration. The chief difference is that of *quantity*, and an important difference this of course is.

A very elaborate calculation has been made of the expenses imposed on the Mint by these processes of recoinage, *plus* the actual loss of precious metal by the wear and tear of every coin. This calculation has been made by Mr. Graham, Master of the Mint, and Colonel Smith, late Master of the Calcutta Mint. Of course if sovereigns and half-sovereigns will and do wear away, somebody or other must bear the loss; and this somebody, in our own country, is the state. We might make a law to the effect that a sovereign shall continue to be a legal tender, a legal representative of twenty shillings, however much it may be worn away, but we could not compel foreign countries to attend to this law; great confusion in

foreign trade would ensue, and the high financial reputation of England would receive a check. It is considered much better for the government or the state, as representative of the whole nation, to bear the loss.

A question lately submitted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the two experienced mint-masters above named assumed this form: 'What would it cost, first to manufacture a sovereign, and afterwards to keep it in good condition for all time?' Each individual coin has a limited existence, and must be withdrawn and replaced by a new coin of full weight, that again by another in due time, and so on. To make the coinage self-supporting, the Mint ought to charge a price that would cover the first mintage and all the subsequent renewals; and this price would be a sort of endowment, which would have to be provided, in some way or other, for the permanent maintenance of the coin. The experience of the English Mint tallies almost exactly with that of the French, that in the large operations to which the two establishments are accustomed, the whole cost of coining a sovereign is just about one halfpenny. As matters stand, we as a nation lose that halfpenny; we pay it out of the taxes. Then there is the loss of metal by wear and tear, above adverted to; and then there is a cost of one halfpenny per sovereign at the end of eighteen years for recoining the piece. These three items have to be combined. Some sovereigns quit the country never to return; some are lost by wreck, fire, and other casualties; some are purposely melted down for special purposes; and it is found that to fill up the gaps thus made, as well as to accommodate the ever-enlarging trade of the country, about four million new sovereigns must be made annually.

Calculations such as actuaries only are accustomed to, and which have rather a frightful look to other folks, lead to this result: that the Mint ought to charge thirty-three shillings extra for every hundred sovereigns supplied, or fourpence per sovereign, in order to defray the expense (1) of the original coining,

(2) of re-coining after intervals of eighteen years, and (3) of the continuous loss of precious metal by wear and tear. Unless we individually pay fourpence per sovereign in this way, for all the use and wear and tear, we must pay it collectively out of the taxes.

Of course silver coins are subject to some such rough usage as those of gold, and even more rapidly and seriously, on account of their incessant movement in retail trade. Indeed it was to the effect of wear on the silver coinage that the attention of the government was in the first instance directed. About eighty years ago the shillings and sixpences were in a condition that we can hardly now imagine. Some were mere flat discs of silver, without a vestige of device or pattern on either surface. Some had been maltreated in the most unmerciful way—bitten, hammered, bent, broken, perforated, filed, stained, blackened—victims of hard work in a cruel world. And when the balance instead of the eye was applied as a test, a significant tale was told. The coins were not only light, but *very* light. The Bank authorities, knowing that sixty-two new shillings (of that date) weighed one pound troy, were rather staggered to find that it required seventy-eight of the worn and torn shillings to turn the scale. With sixpences the case was still worse, for the pound weight absorbed a hundred and ninety-two instead of a hundred and twenty-four; they had actually lost more than one-third of their substance. And these were not picked or selected; they were a fair average sample of the coin paid in every day at the Bank. The crowns and half-crowns were found to be relatively less worn. Eleven years afterwards—that is, about seventy years ago—batches of silver coins were again weighed; they were still worse than before, seeing that it required eighty-three shillings to make up a pound; and as for the sixpences, there were now needed two hundred and one instead of a hundred and ninety-two to weigh a pound. Later investigators have arrived at these curious results:—

that our silver coins, taken one with another, depreciate about a two-hundredth part in the course of a year; whereas our gold coins depreciate a nine-hundredth part. The silver wears four or five times as rapidly as the gold, partly through more severe usage, partly owing to the less durable nature of the metal. We shall readily be able to believe something of this kind; for many of our shillings, and especially our sixpences, have a very queer and shrunken appearance, telling of much wearing, toil, and trouble.

This matter, of the durability of our sovereigns, depends very much on the kind of alloy mixed with the precious metal. For, be it known to us all, the *purest* of gold is not the *best* of gold for coins. Mr. Cavendish, the celebrated philosopher, made many experiments on this subject at the request of the government. He combined gold with more than a dozen other metals, one or two at a time, and shaped the alloys into pieces to represent coins. He then rubbed away for weeks together, with the aid of apparatus devised for the purpose, to ascertain which kind of alloy bore most bravely this severe ordeal. Some he found too soft; some too brittle; some were too soon affected by heat; and some badly coloured. It was satisfactory to the Mint authorities to be told by Mr. Cavendish, as the net result of his experiments, that the usual standard, or sterling, or guinea gold (eleven of pure gold to one of silver), is better fitted than any other combination, and better than pure gold itself, as the material for gold coins. Lest mere rubbing should not imitate the rattling and ringing which coins undergo on the counter and in the till, or not imitate with sufficient closeness, the acute inquirer put his experimental coins into a box mounted on an axle, and rotated it fifty or a hundred thousand times. Such a 'rubbing of shoulders' was seldom before seen; everything rubbed a bit off of everything else; but the result supported the same conclusion as before—sterling gold won the victory.

About ten years ago, Mr. W. Mil-

ler, assistant cashier at the Bank of England, reported, as the fruit of lengthened experience, that sovereigns issued from the Mint in different reigns, or at different times, do not wear equally well; that the wearing is more or less according to differences in alloy, in the impression, or in the temper of the metal; that when the impression is simple, without many sharp prominences, the coin wears better; that a plain rim, with letters round it, wears better than a milled edge; that if the metal is either more soft or less soft than usual, it suffers more in wear; and that the first coinage of a new reign will, after a long period, be found in better condition than one of two or three years' subsequent date, from the fact of many coins of the former date being hoarded as curiosities. Some curious facts came out relative to the difference between wholesale and retail trade, as well as between trade in rich and in poor neighbourhoods, in the effect upon coins. 'A sovereign passed at the West End of London meets with better usage in such shops as jewellers' or milliners' than it does when rung with a strong arm on the counter of a potato salesman, where it would be rubbed by the sand. In commercial towns the coin becomes light sooner than in other places, not only from its greater circulation, but in consequence of the rough usage it undergoes in being so often thrown into bankers' scales and drawers. During a time of great commercial activity, as the coin would be used more, of course its wear would be greater than at other times. It is probable that the coin issued during the last ten years has become light more quickly than that issued in the preceding ten years; and it might perhaps be found that our coin becomes light more rapidly than the coin of other countries.'

The rogues and roughs of this naughty world are always more or less actively at work in making sovereigns light-headed before their time. They *sweat* the coins by shaking them in a bag, thereby rubbing off particles which are

good for the melter. They *split* them, take out a thin film of gold, fill up with a film of some cheaper metal, and doctor up the edges. They *file* them, if the state of wear enables this to be done without too ready chance of detection, and melt or sell the filings. They *wash* them with certain acids which dissolve a little of the gold, and then obtain the gold again from the solution. There may be other modes of robbing the sovereigns of some of their precious metal; but the Mint people do not like to talk much about them, although they doubtless have suspicions. As to the really bad or spurious coins, made and uttered by *smashers*, we do not advert to them here; all our light-headed sovereigns are supposed to be good in

quality, by whatever cause they became light.

Since the above was written, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has put forth a scheme for saving the thirty thousand a year which the state now loses by the coinage. He proposes that a sovereign shall in future weigh one grain less than at present; that the Bank shall receive a coin weighing 123²⁷⁴ grains, in exchange for 123²⁷⁴ grains of bullion. The value of the one grain would cover the expense of coining, the expense of recoining after eighteen years of wear, and the value of the precious metal rubbed off during that period. The matter is submitted for a time to the consideration of bullionists and bankers—in order to 'do nothing rashly.'

CODES OF CEREMONIAL.

II.*

IN our previous paper we endeavoured to show the necessity of forms for the proper working and conduct of society, and at the same time pointed out their variability and elasticity, explaining that their right application is often a mere question of degree. At bottom, the social forms of all civilised nations are based on the grand principle of mutual good-will and of doing to others as we would that others should do to us. There *must* be a reciprocity, both of forbearance and of active kindness. The French have a proverb, 'Un plaisir en vaut un autre,' 'A pleasure conferred deserves another in return,' and in popular language, *plaisir* has a wider sense than the mere dictionary meaning, stretching so far as even to include a money present. When once the mutuality basis of all politeness is admitted and adopted, the rest, as we wrote a twelvemonth ago, will ever be a question of *degree*, to be regulated by the sliding scale of time and opportunity. Hence, cases, anecdotes, and illustrations, are better guides to the true spirit

* See 'London Society' for July, 1868, page 51.

of all ceremonial, than any codes of abstract rules. Common sense and ready tact can alone prevent people from committing blunders and improprieties. If from the sublime to the ridiculous there is only one step, who does not feel that there is only half a step from civility to affectation, from kindness to familiarity, from pleasantry to sarcasm, from dignity to stiffness, from unreserved to rough behaviour, from cheerful fun to boisterousness? Whoever keeps on the right side of the boundary, and, by long usage or by natural instinct, not only does what he ought at the right time and place, but absolutely and completely refrains from everything that would compromise him, may fairly claim the title of a well-bred person.

In manners, as in diplomacy, excess of zeal is a great mistake; in none of its shapes should politeness ever be *over* done. When Francis Joseph, emperor and king, visited the city of Pesth towards the close of 1865, the official world did their utmost to give him a flattering reception. One personage, however, contrived to out-do all the other utterers of pleasant sayings. Francis

Joseph having inquired of the President of the Medical Society what was the sanitary condition of Pesth, the intrepid and hyperbolical doctor replied, 'Your Majesty's presence renders us so happy that not a single individual is ill.'

The emperor had the good sense to reply, 'I believe you exaggerate a little.'

But set compliments are dangerous things to handle. They may be offered in all sincerity, and yet have a very equivocal sound; as in the case of the city knight, unable to aspire to the letter H, who, being deputed to address William III, exclaimed, 'Future ages, recording your Majesty's exploits, will pronounce you to have been a Nero.'

There are African tribes who represent the Virgin Mary as a black, and the Devil as a white. A similar feeling must have inspired the negro's compliment to the great emancipator of his race, 'Goramighty bless Massa Wilberforce! He hab a white face, but he hab a black heart.'

Even in the highest regions, ceremonial has its moments of relaxation. When the French Court is at Compiègne, the guests enjoy great liberty, and are but little restricted by etiquette. Every one breakfasts in their own apartments; friends and acquaintances can breakfast together, if they like. During the day, the gentlemen wear frock coats or jackets; the ladies, ordinary walking dress. They make excursions in the neighbourhood, whithersoever it pleases any one to stroll. On sporting days, a general rendezvous is appointed.

In the evening, full dress is indispensable. The gentlemen in knee-breeches or in uniform, and the ladies in evening dress, assemble for dinner. Then follow cards, *jeux de salon*, drawing-room games, music, or theatrical performances. Any guest, if his affairs require it, can run up to Paris in the course of the day—M. de Rothschild never failed to do so—and return or not for the dinner and the soirée afterwards.

We have seen in print the aphorism, 'All men are equal before

'Politeness,' which is certainly a great mistake. On the contrary, ceremonial politeness recognises and regulates the inequality of men and women. It gives unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to the underling the things that are the underling's. It is as strict as Portia in the matter of the pound of flesh; it forbids the taking a hair's breadth more or less than the pound written in the bond and due to the claimant. It metes out its awards with an iron rule. This is your right, and that is yours; here is his place, and there is theirs. No cavil, dispute, or discussion is possible; still less pleading for indulgence and favour. Can a commoner take precedence of a duke? Can the difference between an earl and a viscount be ignored?

The marriage of the Princess Alexandrine of Prussia, in 1865, was the occasion of raising an important point of etiquette, beautifully illustrating the inequality established by ceremonial amongst the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve. The ambassadors of France and England demanded seats at the royal table, where the crowned heads were to sit. This honour could not possibly be granted. Why? Because the crowned heads refused to admit them to their company? Not a bit of it. The sole and stringent reason for their exclusion was, that the generals who enjoyed the privilege of setting the soup and the boiled beef on the royal table, although willing to serve sovereigns, refused to serve ambassadors. Neither would they waive their right to set the said beef and soup before the royal diners. How, then, was it morally possible to grant the request of the ambassadors? It is easier to climb the Himalayas, to traverse the desert on foot, to swim across the Atlantic, than to break through the inclosures of courtly etiquette.

A far truer maxim is that 'Small presents help to maintain friendship.' Who of us is not pleased with a tasty little present, gracefully offered on a timely occasion? Everybody likes liberality in others, however rarely he may practise it

himself. It is the accepted excuse for prodigals, and has softened many an insolvent's fall. An awkward and a naughty fact is, that people who are generous before they are just, are more popular than those who are just before they are generous. A youthful spendthrift may find many to plead for him, a youthful miser will not have a friend.

Between friends and equals, it is a rule that presents should be of trifling value; when such is not the case, it should be the workmanship rather than the material which renders them valuable. To superiors, only one kind of gifts are admitted as allowable and acceptable; namely, choice provisions, fruit, flowers, garden produce in general, local curiosities and specimens, birds or animals, living or dead, &c. &c. And yet through this rule, as through many an Act of Parliament, a coach and four has often been driven. For instance, when a wealthy nobleman did not dare to offer a young princess a diamond necklace which she wished for as a birthday present, he has got out of the difficulty by sending her a doll wearing the forbidden but desiderated necklace. Dolls, exactly the size of the young ladies for whom they were intended, have also been the innocent conveyancers of accurately-fitting silk dresses, high-priced furs, velvet cloaks and mantles, elaborate lace robes and skirts, and other costly articles of dress, which circumstances and social barriers prevented the giver from laying directly at the recipient's fair feet.

Even admitting the small gift to be a sprat thrown out to catch a mackerel, or, as our French friends phrase it, 'un pois donné pour avoir une fève,' a pea given, to get a broad bean in return—never mind that. Accept the sprat and repay it with a mackerel. It is more blessed to give than to receive. But the gift comes from an interested motive. Well, what of that? Are your own actions always and altogether purely disinterested, especially in the case of anything likely to procure you the favour of others? It is wiser

to take it as flattering to your dignity, a proof of your importance, a tribute to your self-esteem, a plain admission that you are somebody worth conciliating by a little trouble and a trifling outlay. Votive sprats laid upon your altar need remind you of nothing more unpleasant than that you are possessed of mackerel which other people would be very glad to have. Remember that it is better to be envied than pitied, and graciously receive any small-fry homage that may be offered by your less wealthy or less influential acquaintances.

Moreover, there are times (as in cases of sickness, or loss, or temporary deprivation of any accustomed object) when small presents become doubly seasonable and acceptable. And a small present that is at once serviceable and ornamental, frequently in sight and repeatedly in use, is especially both a judicious thing to give and an agreeable thing to receive. Its daily presence recalls the giver to mind, and its daily utility causes him to be gratefully remembered. Such a thing acts much more effectively as a token and a souvenir than a trinket or knick-nack of greater costliness, which is used or perhaps only looked at twice or thrice in the course of a year, and stowed away safe out of sight in its drawer or jewel-case for the rest of the twelvemonth. We have only to consult our own proper feelings, and recall our own private experience, to admit the truth of this remark.

In all barely or semi-civilized countries, presents are a claim, an observance exacted by the great from the small, by the patron from the client, by the resident from the stranger. In the East, they are an indispensable formula of manifesting obedience, respect, or affection. In every land, small presents are admitted to be an approved means of manifesting and maintaining friendship. A word in season, how good it is! And so is a flower or a fruit in season, or a fish or a fowl, wild or tame.

Our late friends, or opponents, the Abyssinians, are very fond of having presents made to them.

They also consider that custom as the best way of keeping up friendships. In Turkey or in Egypt, the first time you enter a house, it is customary to secure your welcome by making presents to the domestics. In Abyssinia, on the contrary, neglecting the servants, you must lose no time in laying your offering before the master. If he accepts it, after consulting his friends, he is obliged either to render you every service in his power, or to return you a present thrice the value of yours. Between equals, it is a compact of friendship—a treaty of alliance, defensive and offensive, on all occasions. In short, although an Abyssinian may bestow alms in charity, he cannot make a present without conditions of receiving its equivalent in some shape or other.

This custom gives rise to ludicrous incidents. Often, at a meeting between two near friends, they will remind each other (enumerating them) of all the services that have been mutually rendered—doubtless, to keep gratitude from growing cold. The sensible part of the population have a saying that Providence gave us a tongue, to ask with. Amongst the Chokos, the custom of begging, always and everywhere, is so deeply-rooted, that several of their chiefs have insisted on being buried with their outstretched hand above the earth, in order not to lose the pleasant habit, even after death.

In some countries, gifts come due, like rents and bills, at certain seasons. In France, there is the universal new year's gift tax, perplexing people's wits to make a choice, and often pressing hard upon their pockets. Easter eggs are less unavoidable; they, however, should contain some surprise. Their value ranges from the merest trifle, through costly trinkets, up to the inestimable and the priceless.

Throughout the whole of a recent Passion week, a lovely and unprotected creature was disconsolate, because her dearest friend—she had no husband—was mean enough to refuse her a charming carriage, brilliant harness, and perfect pair of cream-coloured horses,

on which she had set her feminine mind. 'Ce que Femme veut, Dieu veut.' Sympathy blunts the edge of sorrow. So she confided her griefs to a friend of her friend. Whether they mingled their tears, we know not. But the consequence was that he sent her, in an Easter egg, the means of procuring the equipage in question. It was an extravagant but not an extraordinary egg.

The lady, not to be out-done, contrived a monster egg some five feet long and three feet deep. When finished, it was taken to her friend's apartments, like a sedan chair, by a couple of porters, only reclining on its side. He eagerly opened it, and discovered—not a magnificent Newfoundland dog with a jewelled collar, nor a Lilliputian tiger to ride behind his cab, but—, sweetly sleeping on a bed of roses, the lady's pretty, precious, and pretentious self!

A code now lying before us directs, 'Whatever the object presented to you—even a copy of the Budget or one of Tom Noodle's tragedies—manifest your great satisfaction at receiving it. Let your thanks be warm and not forced or affected.' This is equivalent to our homely saying, 'Never look a gift-horse in the mouth,' about which a good deal may be said. 'Never look a gift-horse in the mouth,' may be taken to mean that any horse, even a Rosinante, gratis, is better than no horse at all, and is therefore to be accepted without any fault-finding. Otherwise, no one observes the rule; everybody does look gift-horses in the mouth. Givers, therefore, do well to take care that the horse's mouth will bear inspection.

'The turkey Smith has sent us this Christmas, looks smaller than usual.'

'Last year's Stilton was decidedly superior to this year's.'

'I wish Cousin Blanco would send his salmon earlier in the season, instead of waiting till August, when it will neither travel nor keep. To be sure, it is at its cheapest now; but I would willingly pay the difference out of my own pocket.'

'Of course I cannot mention it; but Uncle Brown has been nicely taken in. I am sure he would never give me, if he knew it, a chain that was only gilt.'

There are few people who cannot remember to have heard, or uttered, observations similar in style and tone to the above.

'Sir! sir!' shouted an indignant beggar-boy. 'You have given me a bad shilling instead of a half-penny.'

'Have I, really?' exclaimed the hypocritical almsgiver, feigning partial deafness. 'Well, well; never mind for once. You may keep it, this time, as a reward for your honesty.'

'And what are you going to give me to-day?' a flighty beauty inquired of a member of the French Jockey Club.

The *bouquetière*, or flower-girl, attached to the Society, happened fortunately to be close by in attendance. The gentleman selected a single rose, the choicest in the whole collection, and offered it to the importunate fair one.

'Only that?' she pouted, her ideas probably running on more durable though equally portable property. 'Only that? A thing that costs you five or six francs, perhaps.'

'I beg your pardon, it costs two hundred.' And he immediately handed to the official flower-seller ten golden napoleons as the price of her specimen.

It was the sharpest-thorned as well as the dearest rose which the lady had ever received in the whole course of her butterfly existence.

From all which we gather, that, not to look gift-horses in the mouth requires a degree of forbearance too great to expect of ordinary human nature.

It is allowable for people of wealth and rank to season their liberalities with a little fun. An honest, hard-working countryman, who had bought his winter stock of firewood in the Comte de Colombert's forest, came to the château to pay for it.

'Mon Dieu!' said the Comte, 'what an ugly fellow you are!'

'C'est parfaitement vrai. I know I am ugly, Monsieur le Comte; but there are other men uglier than I am.'

'I don't believe it.'

'Si fait! Si fait! Yes, yes. It is the fact.'

'Eh bien! If you bring me an uglier fellow than yourself, you shall have your lot of firewood for nothing.'

The man departed in high glee, because he knew precisely where to lay his hand on this rare pearl of beauty. Finding him at home, he thus gave tongue:

'Bon jour, mon ami. The Comte wants to speak to you on important business. Dress yourself at once, and come along with me.'

'I wonder what he can want me for—doubtless something to my advantage. Allons! I am at your service.'

'Of course you are. The Comte is impatient to see you.'

On the arrival of the pair—*Arcales ambo*, beauties, but not as Byron translates, blackguards both, the Comte acknowledged himself fairly beaten.

'You are right, Master Belhomme,' he said. 'Your friend is uglier than you. So here is the receipt in full for your firewood. But to keep him in countenance, and ready to serve you on the next occasion, I advise you to present him with a couple of écus.'

The presents which ladies may make to gentlemen much depend upon circumstances. As a general rule, and amongst equals, they should never offer anything but trifles whose value consists in their being the donor's handiwork. And on whatever terms of intimacy, or even relationship, you may be with them, it often tasks all your ingenuity to find something to give them in return. Great ladies may claim the masculine privilege of making any presents they please; but it is not always safe to assume the right to a reciprocal liberty. A French lieutenant in the navy had been received with great favour by the ex-queen of Greece. Being a handsome young fellow and vain in proportion. * The old écu was three francs: six francs, therefore, or five shillings in all.

tion, he interpreted it in a way for which there were no real grounds. So happening to fall in with some exquisitely beautiful apples, he bought a hundred, and sent them to the queen with a note.

‘MAJESTY,

‘Paris presented Venus with an apple, because she was the most beautiful of all the goddesses. You are a hundred times handsomer than Venus, I therefore send you a hundred apples,’ &c., &c.

The queen complained to the French minister of the impertinence, and the gay young lieutenant was removed from the station. Nevertheless, very shortly afterwards, his government appointed him to the command of a frigate.

From giving to withholding, the literary transition is easy. Either lavishness or stinginess, habitually practised by nations, must considerably influence their code of manners. Did you ever, gentle reader, remark the difference of the moral point of view from which the great body of the French and English nations respectively philosophise on life in general? We have often meditated, in reference to that diversity in the national character, a lucubration to be entitled ‘The Two Gods: Respectability and Avarice.’ The English are given to worship a fair outside; appearances well kept up; admission to certain coteries, the more exclusive the better to their liking. Consequently they dread the slightest breath that may threaten to tarnish either their private or their commercial reputation; &c., &c. On the other hand, the French, taken as a body of men, are inclined to fall down before the golden calf; court solid wealth, for its own sake rather than for the consideration it brings; and have a great propensity to secret hoarding combined with a parsimonious style of living. When they do indulge in extravagant expenditure, it is rather the outbreak of reckless young spendthrifts, and the indulgence of strong sensual passion, than a deliberate course of action employed in the hope of maintaining a precarious position, of hiding empty pockets, or tiding over insolvent

business concerns. Hence different temptations and different motives, leading to different errors and crimes, when the leading passion or stringent circumstance acquires undue power over the individual, and evolving different dramas of equal interest, but unlike in their course and their springs of action. Hence also the difference of the social codes, according as respectability or avarice is the ruling influence.

In all nations, misers are to be found; and the appearance here and there of a few such characters is no proof of wide-spread or general penuriousness. But when a nation accuses itself, when everybody tells tales of his neighbour’s avarice, there must be reasonable grounds for believing in the prevalence of that ‘good old-gentlemanly vice.’ The newspapers abound with anecdotes in confirmation of the fact. Local newspapers fling at one another stories of stupid self-denial in the midst of abundant means, or of penny-wise-and-a-pound-foolishness. The two following traits of avarice are ascribed to a parish near Valenciennes. We gather them from a whole parterre of flowers of stinginess which lies before us, to pick and choose.

Madame X——, living in a rickety old house, had the imprudence to trust a little boy with a five-franc piece; not to play with—it was too precious, almost too sacred a thing for that—but to admire, and perhaps say his prayers to, as he would to the picture of his patron saint. The careless, wicked child, regardless of his trust, let the heavy silver coin fall and disappear behind the planks of a dilapidated staircase. Great was the consternation of the family. Though far from being indigent or even straitened, their nerves could not stand such a shock as that. They tried to take the staircase to pieces, but the well-seasoned oak resisted their efforts. They sent for a mason; he warned them to think twice before they pulled an old house about their ears, for the sake of five francs. He might as well have talked to the winds; they thought of nothing but recovering the five-franc piece. A large bit of wall was soon in ruins;

the staircase itself was taken down—and nothing found. The coin had probably rolled into a mouse-hole. Everybody set to work like mad, to assist the mason in his search. Pavements were broken up, excavations made in the floor, and the whole house filled with earth and rubbish. On halting for breath, they took fright at the spectacle, and began to think it might be time to stop and leave the lost money where it was. In the hope of recovering a four-shilling piece, they had committed damage to the amount of more than five pounds.

Another thrifty dame, Madame Z—, allowed her aged father to reside under her roof. One day the old gentleman complained of indisposition. They went to the doctor's, and bought him some medicine; but it turned out so nauseous that the patient refused to take it, saying that he preferred the disease to the remedy. Nevertheless, it was quite out of the question to waste physic that had cost hard cash. Madame Z—, after making that reflection, soon solved the difficulty. Although in the enjoyment of perfect health, she took the potion from the old man's hand, and swallowed it with a courage worthy of Socrates. And here the story ought to end; but it was reported in the neighbourhood that the lady's measure did not turn out altogether so fruitless as the search after the five-franc piece above related.

Not less heartily welcomed are stories recording how people have overreached themselves; how young men, marrying ugly and incapable women for the sake of their dowry, have missed the money and been saddled with the wife; how exorbitant claims have been resisted; how greedy and skin-flint tradesmen or innkeepers have been paid off with 'tit-for-tat.' Thus:—

A few days since, a traveller arrived by railway at a locality not far from the Belgian frontier, and went to a hotel which we refrain from naming. Dinner being ready, and his appetite keen, he took his place forthwith at the table d'hôte, depositing his carpet-bag on the chair beside him. Next day, on call-

ing for his bill, he was surprised to find in it 'Dinner for two.' His complaint was met by the observation, that, as his carpet-bag had occupied the place of a guest, he was bound to bear the innkeeper's loss. Very well; be it so. He paid the bill without further remark, and went about his affairs in Belgium.

A few days afterwards he returned to the same town and went to the same hotel. Untaught by his previous lesson, he would not part with his inseparable carpet-bag, but again placed it on the chair beside him. This time, however, it was open-mouthed; and of every dish that was offered to its master, the carpet-bag received its share—now the wing of a duck, then a bit of beef, and then a dainty slice of ham. The guests wondered, but said nothing; the innkeeper at last *did* venture to remonstrate. 'Sir,' said the traveller, 'the last time I was here, I paid for my carpet-bag's dinner, although it ate nothing. But if its appetite is improved today, you cannot reasonably complain of my indulging it.'

The traveller, having the laughers on his side, got ample revenge for the previous extortion.

It is difficult to say, according to some people's notions, what may *not* be put into a bill.

'You have killed the waiter,' said a restaurant-keeper to an Englishman, 'because he brought you soup with a hair in it.'

'Put him into the bill, then,' was the reply.

A lady, possessed of a rather scanty wardrobe, and therefore hard pressed for time by the receipt of an unexpected invitation, went to order a dress for an imminent ball. It was requisite that the delicate and much-discussed article should be ready in four-and-twenty hours. The dressmaker, overwhelmed with orders, hesitated to undertake the herculean task. But the dress, as may be supposed, was indispensable for the occasion. The day after the ball it would be useless.

'Since you cannot make me a formal promise,' observed the lady, 'I am very sorry, but for this once I *must* go to another dressmaker.'

The artiste's eyes flashed with indignation. Nevertheless she controlled herself, observing, in a tone only a little less amiable than usual—

‘I hardly know, in truth, whether madame *can* permit herself to go elsewhere—for, after all—’

‘After all?’

‘Now that I have given madame my ideas—’

‘Good,’ said the lady, leaving the room in a pet. ‘You will send me the bill for your ideas.’

As may be imagined, great pecuniary prudence is manifested in contracting holy wedlock. Matrimonial agencies are as publicly recognised, though not quite so numerous, as register-offices for servants. In a country where there is no divorce, husbands and wives cannot change their places quite so frequently as valets, cooks, and *femmes de chambre*. It is only fair, however, to state that the bargaining, which precedes almost all French matches, is less the work of the young people themselves than the result of the immense power possessed by parents and near relations to check, retard, and eventually prevent imprudent or undesirable marriages.

‘You are dull this morning, nephew. What is the matter with you? But I suppose you are thinking about Sophie and the water-mill?’

‘No, indeed, uncle, I am not.’

‘Ah, I see! You mean to take the farm and Flore. Well; there is no objection to that.’

‘Yes, uncle, indeed there is.’

‘You prefer some other kind of property. Nevertheless, you might do worse. Farms are safe, and so are watermills.’

‘The truth is, uncle, I have fallen in love with Rose.’

‘Rose who? Rose Lefebvre? and pray what has *she* got?’

‘Nothing.’

‘Nothing! Fallen in love with nothing! You are a greater fool than I took you to be.’

The following is guaranteed as genuine.

Lately, two families of small farmers met in the ‘study’ of a notary, in the neighbourhood of

Orleans, to draw up the marriage contract between the son of the one and the daughter of the other. All went right, till the cash was discussed.

‘How much do you mean to give your son down?’ asked the young lady’s father.

‘Fifty francs (two pounds) was the stingy answer.

‘Oh, no! that’s not enough. You’ll surely go as far as a hundred francs.’

‘No; fifty francs, and not a centime more.’

‘Very well. In that case, I shall take my pig to a better market.’

He was as good as his word, and led the girl away; nor is there at present any likelihood that the young people will ever come together again.

Still, there are persons perfectly capable of bargaining on their own account. Witness the frequent matrimonial advertisements, which are serious business affairs, and not mere hoaxes, as a stranger at first sight might suspect. The following appeared both in the ‘Constitutionnel’ and the ‘Opinion Nationale’:

‘Somebody wishes (*on désiré*) to marry an aged person, either an old maid or a widow, possessed of property. Write, post-paid, to A. Z. 4, Poste-restante, Paris.’

As we are on the subject of marriage, we will conclude with a few maxims from another French ‘Code,’ now lying before us:—

‘Keep your marriage projects secret till the very moment when you appear before the mayor (to celebrate the civil marriage, which precedes the religious marriage). It is the only way to prevent gossip.

‘Invited to a wedding feast, conduct yourself with the same decorum as you would at any ordinary repast.

‘If you sing broad comic songs, or make equivocal jokes, or address the bride in double meanings, or make crude observations on her change of condition, you are a coarse fellow and a vulgar personage. A well-bred man would carefully refrain from the slightest indelicate allusion to the subject.

‘If there is a ball after the dinner,

the bride should open it with the most honourable man in the company, or with her husband.

' The guests ought not to seem to be aware of the bride's departure, when she retires.

' A single young lady ought never to be present at the putting of a bride to bed.

' The new-married couple ought to call on their relations and the wedding guests within a fortnight after their marriage. Other friends and acquaintances receive letters of *faire part*. The wedding guests

return the call within a week, at the very latest.

' There are mothers who will not take their young unmarried daughters to the play, and yet allow them to go to a wedding. What inconsistency!

' Weddings are the poor man's ruin, and the triumph of the rich man's vanity. Sensible people do not make a *noce*, i.e., expensive and riotous wedding feasts and rejoicings; and if the fashion were more widely spread, decency and modesty would be the gainers by it.'

E. S. D.

DARK OR FAIR.

(ILLUSTRATED.)

MAIDEN fair
With the golden hair—
Sweet Brunette
With the locks of jet,
As you roam side by side
On the marge of the tide,
I know not on which my heart I should set.

The hazel orb
Will the heart absorb,
And the eye of blue
Is tender and true:
But when both are together
This sunshiny weather,
Their powers combined must our peace undo.

Beautiful pair,
Our bosoms spare!
The moon and the sun
Shine never as one,
And why should you two
Both rise on our view
When either alone had our worship won?

From crown unto feet
In beauty complete,
Like the Night and the Day
Together you stray,
Past the pier and the shipping
So daintily tripping
In your pretty, bewitching, unconscious way!

The maiden fair
Would I gladly declare
My darling—and yet
There's the dark-eyed Brunette!
And I vow on my word
To say which I preferred
Is a question with terrible doubt beset



CLASSICAL FIGURE
DRAWN BY THOMAS L. GREEN, 1871

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DARK OR FAIR.

(ILLUSTRATED.)

MAIDEN fair
With the golden hair—
Swan-Necked
With the locks of jet,
A poor brown maid by mile
On the margin of the tide,
I know not on which my boat I shoud set.

The hand soft
With the nose almost,
And the eye of blue
Is tender and true;
But when both are together
This sunshiny weather,
Their powers combined put out our peace undo.

Beautiful pair,
How becomes apart!
The moon and the sun
Shine never so one,
And why should you two
Both rise on one moon
When either alone had our worship *all*?

From crown to heel
In beauty complete,
Like the Night and the Day
Together you sleep,
Past the pier still the shipping
So daintily tripping
In your pretty, bewitching, unconscious way!

The maidens fair
Would I gladly declare
My darling—and yet
There's the dark-eyed Brunette!
And I vow on my word
To say which I preferred
Is a question with terrible doubt beset



DARK OR FAIL?

Drawn by T. W. Green.)

What shall I do
To decide 'twixt the two?
So beautiful both
That to choose I am loth,
And which was the fairest,
The sweetest and rarest
I could not declare, were I put on my oath!

If I ventured to toss
It would end in my loss,
Since if 'woman' I cried
There'd be one on each side:—
Here Britannia is seen—
And there our loved Queen!
So on no coign of 'vantage 'twould prove I relied!

Brunette and fair maid
Like Sunshine and Shade—
Each in her sphere
Is the loveliest here,
And I own I'm as fond
Of Brunette and of Blonde.
A shocking confession I very much fear.

IN A KENTISH MEADOW.

A Retrospect.

IS there no advance on fifteen hundred? At fifteen hundred, going;—a pause, and the hammer falls — a likely-looking colt by Stockwell, the pick of Middle Park, being knocked down to a tall comoner who sits on the box of a drag near the off-side of the circle. No ordinary sale is this of carriage nags or hacks; and though some of the lots may in time descend to 'plating,' we have before us the stuff of which Derby and Oaks winners are made. It is a blazing Saturday in the height of the season; fully a thousand purchasers and spectators are on the ground; and over fifty 'traps' of various kinds form a ring round the rostrum of our most noted auctioneer. He is tall and of comely exterior, and but for the emblem of office wielded by his well-gloved right hand, might be chosen at hazard for one of patrician extraction. A century has elapsed since the establishment so long known as the 'Corner' first became famous, and it has passed from father to son and to grandson and great-grandson till we come to its present presiding genius who stands before us.

VOL. XVI.—NO. XCIII.

Throughout their career the family have borne an untainted name, and their character for straightforwardness has ever insured the respect of all with whom they have had dealings. Right and left of him sit representatives of the press to the number of a dozen or so. The stout, farmer-like looking man nearest the auctioneer furnishes information to a rising sporting journal hardly yet three years old, but already possessing a reputation for the excellence of its reports and the soundness of its ideas on all matters connected with sport. He is probably one of the best judges of a horse on the ground, and relies on breeding, make, shape, and public form when offering opinions on coming events rather than on the uncertain movements of the market. The 'sage of Carshalton,' too, occupies a prominent position, and expresses his notions in somewhat pronounced terms, similar, in fact, to those we may find on reference to his highly-spiced and amusing paper. Near him sits a tall grey man of military appearance, but evidently padded and dyed. The

'Thunderer' retains his services, and, as becomes his station, he holds himself the merest shade aloof from the rest of his brethren, though affable and courteous when replying to an inquiry or seeking information. On the left stand a couple of gentlemen belonging to the staff of *Nunquam dormio*, the hand of one of whom may be found in the prophetic article, whilst the other sings sweetly under the shade of an 'Orange Blossom.' His pen is ever ready, his rhymes never lack point, and are scholarly withal. A little distance off, conversing with a well-known jockey on the points of the colt just purchased, we esp'y the fiery correspondent of 'Jupiter junior.' He is here for a sort of holiday after the labours of the week, and mayhap to pick up the latest gossip or scandal, which we shall read, dressed with a *sauce piquante*, in Monday's issue. There, too, reclining on the wheel of a barouche, is the 'Man about Town,' and not far away, talking to a foreign agent, commissioned by his government to reside in this country with a view to the purchase of some of our best 'crossing strains,' loiters the 'Gentleman in Black,' whose lucubrations find space in the pages of 'Baily.'

We next come upon a group of more interest to racing men, and perhaps also to general visitors. They are lounging in various positions about a waggonette, and, having already purchased two or three serviceable-looking lots, seem to be turning their minds to the champagne-cup just handed to them by the main spring of the most famous breeding establishment in the world. The Earl of Open-hand it is who has raised his hat to Lady Limmer, and with an approved bow offers her the tankard. Above all others he is liked by his 'set.' Of a kindly, chivalrous nature, backed up by good looks and a handsome inheritance, he is the fascination of the women, while the men are happy who can lock an arm in his and stroll with him along Pall Mail, for they are in the company of a daring soldier, a first-rate horseman, an extensive owner of blood stock, and perhaps one of the

most agreeable and well-dressed fellows of the day. He was formerly in the Guards; then volunteering for the Crimea, he took his turn at trench-work and in the field, returning loaded with honours and bearing a high name for valour and fearlessness. Succeeding, however, to an earldom, he plunged headlong into the wildest dissipations of London life and the extravagances of the Turf. Gradually the harpies gathered their nets around him, and although for a time he eluded and baffled them, his strategy was but that of one against many, and to-day he too surely finds himself a long way down the road towards that end which must bring with it ruin and desolation. Still he bears himself as of old and recklessly awaits his fate. On his right leans over a Yorkshire baronet, relating an adventure to a well-known member of the Gun Club. Both are prosperous, well-to-do men. Sir G. Turnbull has seen much service, and was one of the 'six hundred' who immortalised themselves by their desperate ride for the guns. Taken prisoner by the Cossacks, he might have met a hard fate had not good luck and his own strong arm befriended him. Left for an instant with a couple of guards, he seized upon a sword and cut them both down; then catching a stray horse succeeded, after half a score of hairbreadth escapes, in rejoining the few of his regiment who were left at the close of that disastrous day. He, too, returned to England to hear of the death of his father, and after a night of 'wrist-shaking' in St. James's Street that involved years of care to make up his income, devoted himself to farming and to following a pack of hounds, of which, later on, owing to a sad accident which befel their master, he was requested to assume the direction and control. His bearer is Sir C. Regaud, a crack shot and a heavy speculator, with a talent for horse-racing such as few men, except those who live by their wits, possess. He has owned not a few famous animals already, and though the down on his chin is hardly rooted, his *finesse* has received commenda-

tion from experienced hands, and he is spoken of at the clubs as a shrewd promising 'lad.'

Not far off, in solemn conclave, are 'the confederacy,' both commoners, who pulled off the Derby and a 66 to 1 chance not many years ago. The civilian already noticed as the buyer of a colt will shortly make his voice heard in the lower house, and will gradually withdraw from the Turf; but 'the Captain' still continues to run his horses and to hit the 'ring' some hard knocks, having a tremendously large stud under his control.

Near to the pair reclines the pale, worn-looking Marquis of Harold. More than 100,000*l.* passed from his possession over Hermit's Derby, and still he gambles on and cares little what may come. Never a rich man, he was always discontented unless he could bet. On a 5*l.* plate, with three or four runners, he would think nothing of backing his fancy to win 10,000*l.*, and it is reckoned by his commissioners, and the few turfites with whom he did business on so extensive a scale, that during his brief racing career he won upwards of *three millions of money*. His losses, of course, must have been similarly enormous, but it is supposed that the expenses of a costly stud, seldom fewer than sixty animals, of town and country houses, and of entertainments, combined with a weakness for deep play, led to his early poverty, rather than the amount parted with on the Turf. His transactions were never limited, and even hampered as he eventually found himself, he could not refrain from laying or taking the odds until that disastrous back end of the year came when, failing to meet a large engagement, he found himself prevented temporarily from seeing his own horses run. This was a severe blow, and probably hastened to some extent the end which was so fast approaching. Later a compromise was effected, and he again 'assisted' at Newmarket. But the pluck for which he had been so celebrated a year before was gone; the voice which had so often shot a fielder and mulct him of a large stake was silent; the marquis's day had

passed. One betting man, out of pure compassion, begged of him to back his fancy for a few hundreds, adding, 'Pay when you like, you know, my lord.' The offer was kindly meant, no doubt, but it told only too plainly how the tide of affairs had changed, and with calm dignity it was rejected. The subsequent retirement of the marquis from racing did away, in a great measure, with the false prices which his leviathan speculations had brought about, and horses against whom, by reason of the enormous sum of money they were backed for at the post in a single 'hand,' not more than 3 to 1 could previously have been obtained, returned, in races of similar calibre, to 7 to 1 or 10 to 1, allowing the public to win something like a stake in the event of success.

A short distance away, in the midst of a little group, may be seen the 'Admiral,' the chief of our turf legislators, whose flats have for years been readily accepted. He still remains the prince of handicappers, and his duties require the guidance of a steady hand. 'Cute indeed is the owner who can mislead him, or the trainer who can remove a previously-formed notion of the quality or merits of a racer. Book in hand, and with his Voightlander brought to bear on the race, the 'Admiral' steadily notes the running of every horse, which is forward for three-quarters of a mile, which is stopped by the hill, where weight begins to tell; how the Sweetmeat filly, of whom such great things were expected, is but a jade after all; and how little Snaffles is pulling double to keep his charge in check. All these things are jotted down; and when the great handicaps are published, trainers and owners find to their chagrin that the quality of their favourites is already known to an ounce, and that their pet schemes for throwing dust in the eyes of the handicapper have signally failed. Now and again discrepancies may 'crop up,' but as a rule the weights are administered with an impartial justice that admits of but few adverse criticisms. If the 'Admiral' has a fault it is that

of being too outspoken, as we have found in many curious racing matters. Not by any means that he is incorrect, but simply because it is easier to say than to substantiate; and when he has been called on for proofs they have been difficult to find, although the sympathies of the public have been with him.

Another looker-on amidst a knot of his brethren is the gigantic Sheffield speculator, whose huge form and stentorian lungs have been celebrated any time these fifteen years. The days were when he dabbled little in horse-racing, but had the reputation of being one of the astutest backers of pedestrians, amongst whom many still living have 'taken their breathings' from his stable. He supported the speedy Tom Horspool and the equally celebrated Jim Sheridan, the former of whom ran a mile in the then fastest time on record, viz., 4 min. 28 sec., and followed up the feat by covering in the ensuing summer the same distance in 4 min. 23 sec., a rate of celerity unsurpassed for over two years. A fortunate 'land' over a handicap put our leviathan in possession of wherewith to begin his turf career, and by degrees he has attained wealth and position, paying his way with scrupulous honesty, and never shirking an engagement however sorely it tried his purse. Like the late Mr. Gully, he has ever been one of the first to enter the rooms on settling-day, and amongst the last to leave, every claim on him being satisfied in full before the doors closed upon him. Amongst his stanchest friends he reckons the 'Squire of Oram,' who declines not far off in a pony-chaise. He is now stricken by disease, and but a shadow of the man who five years ago was the life of the ring and the hunting-field, ever ready for sport, and imbued with a love of fair play and high sense of honour seldom expected in men of his class. He has attained the respect of his associates and the companionship of men in high positions in life; wealth, too, is his, and with it he has established a stud-farm for breeding purposes, which would in time be made second to none. Already

Blair Athol ranks amongst his purchases, and far and wide he has secured the best blood the country can afford. But what of all this? Consumption has marked him with its deadly hand, and at an early age he must leave the fruits of his tremendous labours. The outside world knows nothing of the life of a gambler, and cannot guess at the hardships and anxieties he must undergo. The wear and tear of travelling almost daily for nine months out of the twelve, the early rising to see the horses gallop, tearing about the paddock, enclosure and course all day, shouting the odds and running immense risks; then attending at the rooms at night and hanging about until the small hours, retiring perhaps after all with the consciousness that the chief race of the morrow must end in the loss of several thousand pounds through the treachery or ill luck of some owner whose horse had never been laid against, and whose scratching or lameness, or what not, has alone prevented his winning. This continual wear and tear of mind and body during eighteen or nineteen hours out of the twenty-four are more than human nature can long endure; and those speculators who watch the horses and the market and the people behind the scenes, and live after all to a long age, must be possessed of constitutions and nerves of iron.

Another form easily recognized by an 'outsider,' and thoroughly known to every frequenter of race-meetings, is that of Mr. Raine, who any time during the past half-century has been an upholder of the turf and of sport of every description. As a horseman, a crack shot, and a whist-player of the highest order, he has ever ranked amongst the most popular men of his time, and his unblemished honour and long experience have caused his *dicta* on all games of chance or skill to be accepted at the clubs and elsewhere without hesitancy or demur. He was the friend and companion of Oxbaldston and of Kennedy, and one of the chief actors in the unhappy 'Queen of Diamonds' scandal, which resulted in the disgrace of Lord de la

Roos, one of the leaders of society and a most accomplished man. In converse with Mr. Raine is a tall, stout, jolly-looking fellow, pointed out to strangers as the first trainer of the day. His connection with the turf began first as a jockey, and he has since had the care of horses belonging to all the principal owners, his stables at Danebury having enclosed the winners of hundreds of races and of tens of thousands of pounds in stakes. One of his greatest patrons was the late Lord Palmerston, to whom on an application for a place for his son, the veteran trainer stated that the 'young 'un had been highly tried and had won easily.' Latterly a succession of events have threatened to militate against his success; but he has borne himself well in his encounters with the world, and still enjoys the patronage of a large number of owners, who place the fullest reliance on his judgment and probity. Other trainers, too, are on the ground, including he that had the care of the redoubtable Frenchman whose double victory in the Derby and St. Leger will long be remembered by the sporting world. Amongst the jockeys, too, we note the forms of several of the flower of England's horsemen, jockeys as great as the Chifneys or the Days, celebrated as they were; jockeys whose forte lies in a rapid start for a half-mile spin; jockeys whose power to hold up or help their cattle along is tremendous; and jockeys whose finish is a marvel of grand riding, and whose patience is the

surprise of their fellows. A few of them already have the world beaten, but for the most part it is 'come easy go easy' with them, and ere they reach that age when they should cross a horse for pleasure only, they will see the folly they have committed in squandering their earnings in the reckless manner which sporting men so thoroughly enjoy.

We have not surveyed half the celebrities present, and yet the printer bids us wind up, the space allotted to us being already over-filled. We should like to have looked over 'Lord Freddy's' book on the Leger, or watched the movements of the 'Baron,' for whom many of the lots possess unusual interest. Or it may be the 'Squire,' who was so soon to pass from amongst us, will shortly make a purchase. The 'Spider' also we ought to have noticed, as he marks the investments of the 'flies' on whom he will but too soon and too surely pounce. He possesses a hold on half a dozen of the fattest of them, and will shortly take possession of the property of one to the tune of 97,000/., and, unabashed, fight the case before a court of law against another of his class. Horse-racing as a sport can never die out in this country; but it is improbable that speculation will again be carried on so extensively as since the year 1860. Owners will be able to breed and train at a lighter cost; and, in fact, it is very unlikely we shall in future see a gathering 'in a Kentish meadow,' or hear such prices offered.

H. B.



A HEART UNFELLOWED.

THE autumn mellowed the year, the year,
 And by the sea
 Sat an angel, or fay, or lady rare—
 I know not which—with a shell at her ear
 That from the depths of the ocean near
 Whispered and wailed this melody:—

‘Oh! if it were mine to love, to love,
 And thou wert she;
 Thou should’st to me be an isle of the prime,
 Where, rolling backwards the wheels of Time,
 All bliss should meet in an Eden clime,
 And I would be the ambient sea.

‘Oh! if to thee, my love, my love,
 But once were given;
 Thou should’st to me be the fount of light,
 The star of stars in the infinite,
 And I, as worlds glowed into sight,
 Would be the gazing rest of heaven.

‘Oh! if, in the might of thee and love,
 To dare were mine;
 The throne of the world should be my seat,
 The neck of the world should bend at thy feet,
 And the waves of its praise should break most sweet
 That they were doubly mine and thine.

Oh! if to thee I brought my love,
 An offering;
 My captives of victor thought, I ween,
 Should march in flowers with dainty mien,
 And, paying homage to thee their queen,
 Tell me I was the more a king.

‘Tis mine, alas! to love, to love,
 And thou art she.
 Not a word? not a sigh?—I am too bold;
 My heart is on fire, but thine is cold;
 Thus the empty sum of my life is told—
 That I am nought, since nought to thee!’

Such were the words of the shell, the shell,
 Words sad and few;
 But whose was the voice that spake to her ear,
 That whispered and wailed forth its deep despair,
 Was more than that angel or lady rare,
 Or fay, or shell, or ocean knew.

A. H. G.

M. OR N.

'Similia similibus curantur.'

By G. J. WHYTE-MELVILLE,

AUTHOR OF 'DIGBY GRAND,' 'CERISE,' 'THE GLADIATORS,' ETC.

CHAPTER XXV.

COAXING A FIGHT.

MR. RYFE could now congratulate himself that his puppets were fairly on the stage prepared for their several parts; and it remained but to bring them into play; and with that view, he summoned all the craft of his experience to assist the cunning of his nature.

Lord Bearwarden, amongst other old-fashioned prejudices, clung to an obsolete notion that there are certain injuries, and those of the deepest and most abiding, for which neither the opinion of society, nor the laws of the land, afford redress, and which can only be wiped out by personal encounter of man to man. It seemed to him that he could more easily forget his sorrow, and turn with a firmer tread into the beaten track of life, after a snap shot at Mr. Stanmore across a dozen yards of turf. Do not blame him; remember his education and the opinions of those amongst whom he lived. Remember, too, that his crowning sorrow had not yet taught him resignation, an opiate which works only with lapse of time. There is a manlier and a truer courage than that which seeks a momentary oblivion of its wrongs in the excitement of personal danger—there is a heroism of defence, far above the easier valour of attack—and those are distinguished as the bravest troops that under severe loss preserve their discipline and formation, without returning the fire of an enemy.

Lord Bearwarden, however, as became the arm of the service to which he belonged, was impatient of inaction, and had not yet learned to look on hostilities in this light.

'We'll parade him, Tom,' said he, affecting a cheerfulness which did not the least deceive his companion.

'I don't want to make a row about it of course. I'll spare her, though she hardly deserves it, but I'll have a shap at him, and I'll shoot him, too, if I can! You needn't put us up much further than the width of this room!'

They were closeted together at the back of a certain unassuming hotel, where their addresses, if required, would be consistently denied. The room in question was small, gloomy, and uncomfortable, but so shaded and sequestered, that, lulled by its drowsy glimmer, for its inmates, as for the lotus-eaters, 'it was always afternoon.'

'Suppose he won't fight,' observed Tom, shaking his head.

'Won't fight!' repeated his lordship, in high disdain. 'Curse him—he *must* fight. I'll horsewhip him in the Park! That's all nonsense, Tom. The fellow 's a gentleman. I'll say that for him. He'll see the propriety of keeping the whole thing quiet, if it was only out of regard for *her*. You must settle it, Tom. It's a great deal to ask. I know I ought to have gone to a brother-officer, but this is a peculiar case, you see, and the fewer fellows in the hunt the better!'

Mr. Ryfe mused. He didn't much like his job, but reflected that, under the management of any one else, an explanation would assuredly put everything in its true light, and his web would all be brushed away. What he required was a scandal; a slander so well sustained, that Lady Bearwarden's character should never recover it, and for such a purpose nothing seemed so efficacious as a duel, of which she should be the cause. He imagined also, in his inexperience, like the immortal Mr. Winkle, that these encounters

were usually bloodless, and mere matters of form.

'You're resolved, I suppose,' said Tom. 'I needn't point out to you, my lord, that such a course shuts every door to reconciliation—precludes every possibility of things coming right in future. It's a strong measure—a very strong measure—and you really mean to carry it through?'

'I've made up my mind to shoot him,' answered the other, doggedly. 'What's the use of jawing about it? These things should be done at once, my good fellow. If we have to go abroad, we'll start to-morrow night.'

'I'd better try and hunt him up without delay,' said Tom. 'It's easier to find a fellow now than in the middle of the season, but I might not hit upon him to-night, nevertheless.'

Lord Bearwarden looked at his watch. 'Try his club,' said he. 'If he dines there, it's about the time. They'll know his address at any rate, and if you look sharp you might catch him at home dressing for dinner. I'll wait here and we'll have a mutton-chop when you come in. Stick to him, Tom. Don't let him back out. It would have saved a deal of trouble,' added his lordship, while the other hurried off, 'if I could have caught that cab to-day. She'd have been frightened, though, and upset. Better as it is, perhaps, after all.'

Mr. Ryse did not suffer the wheels of his chariot to tarry, nor the grass to grow beneath his feet. Very few minutes elapsed before he found himself waiting in the strangers' room of a club much affected by Dick Stanmore, comforted with a hall-porter's assurance that the gentleman he sought had ordered dinner, and could not fail to arrive almost immediately. He had scarcely taken up the evening paper when Mr. Stanmore came in.

Anything less like a conscience-stricken Lothario, burdened with the guilt of another man's wife, can scarcely be imagined. Dick's eye was bright, his cheek blooming, his countenance radiant with health,

happiness, and the light from within that is kindled by a good conscience and a loving heart. He came up to Ryse with a merry greeting on his lips, but stopped short, marking the gravity of that gentleman's face and the unusual formality of his bow.

'My errand is a very painful one,' said Tom. 'I regret to say, Mr. Stanmore, that I have come to you on a most unpleasant business.'

'I thought you'd come to dinner,' answered Dick, no whit disconcerted. 'Never mind. Let's have it out. I dare say it's not half so bad as it seems.'

'It could not possibly be worse,' was the solemn rejoinder. 'It involves life and honour for two gentlemen, both of whom I respect and esteem. For the sake of one, a very dear friend, I have consented to be here now. Mr. Stanmore, I come to you on behalf of Lord Bearwarden.'

Dick started. The old wound was healed, and, indeed, perfectly cured now, but the skin had not yet grown quite callous over that injured part.

'Go on,' said he. 'Why didn't Lord Bearwarden come himself?'

'Impossible!' answered Tom, with great dignity. 'Contrary to all precedent. I could not have permitted such a thing. Should not have listened to it for a moment. Quite inadmissible. Would have placed every one in a false position. His lordship has lost no time in selecting an experienced friend. May I hope, Mr. Stanmore, will be equally prompt? You understand me, of course.'

'I'm hanged if I do!' replied Dick, opening his eyes very wide. 'You must speak plainer. What is it all about?'

'Simply,' said the other, 'that my principal assures me he feels confident your own sense of honour will not permit you to refuse him a meeting. Lord Bearwarden, as you must be aware, Mr. Stanmore, is a man of very high spirit and peculiarly sensitive feelings. You have inflicted on him some injury of so delicate a nature that even from me, his intimate friend, he with-

holds his confidence on the real facts of the case. He leads me to believe that I shall not find my task very difficult, and my own knowledge of Mr. Stanmore's high character and jealous sense of honour points to the same conclusion. You will, of course, meet me half way, without any further negotiation or delay.'

"If he's ever spoken three words of endearment to 'the Viscountess,'" reflected Tom, "he'll understand at once. If he hasn't, he'll think I'm mad!"

"But I can't fight without I'm told what it's for," urged Dick, in considerable bewilderment. "I don't know Lord Bearwarden well. I've nothing to do with him. We've never had a quarrel in our lives."

"Mr. Stanmore!" replied the other. "You surprise me. I thought you quite a different sort of person. I thought a *gentleman*—here a flash in Dick's eye warned him not to go too far—'a gentleman of your intelligence would have anticipated my meaning without trying to force from me an explanation, which indeed it is out of my power to make. There are injuries, Mr. Stanmore, on which outraged friendship cannot bear to enlarge for which a man of honour feels bound to offer the only reparation in his power. Must we *force* you, Mr. Stanmore, into the position we require, by overt measures, as disgraceful to you as they would be unbecoming in my friend?'

"Stop a moment, Mr. Ryfe," said Dick. "Do you speak now for yourself or Lord Bearwarden?"

There was a slight contraction of the lip accompanying this remark that Tom by no means fancied. He hastened to shelter himself behind his principal.

"For Lord Bearwarden, decidedly," said he, "and without intention of the slightest discourtesy. My only object is indeed to avoid, for both parties, anything so revolting as a personal collision. Have I said enough?"

"No, you haven't!" answered Dick, who was getting warm while his dinner was getting cold. "If you won't tell me what the offence is,

how can I offer either redress or apology?"

"No apology would be accepted," replied Mr. Ryfe, loftily. "Nor, indeed, does his lordship consider that his injuries admit of extenuation. Shall I tell you his very words, Mr. Ryfe, addressed to me less than an hour ago?"

"Drive on," said Dick.

"His lordship's words, not my own, you will bear in mind," continued Tom, rather uncomfortable, but resolved to play out his trump card. "And I only repeat them, as it were in confidence, and at your own request. "Tom," said he, "nothing on earth shall prevent our meeting. No. Not if I have to horsewhip Mr. Stanmore in the Park to bring it about."

"If that don't fetch him," thought Tom, "he's not the man I take him for."

It did fetch him. Dick started, and turned fiercely on the speaker.

"The devil!" he exclaimed. "Two can play at that game, and perhaps he might come off the worst! Mr. Ryfe, you're a bold man to bring such a message to me. I'm not sure how far your character of ambassador should bear you harmless; but, in the mean time, tell your principal I'll accommodate him with pleasure, and the sooner the better."

Dick's blood was up, as indeed seemed natural enough under so gross an insult, and he was all for fighting now, right or wrong. Tom Ryfe congratulated himself on the success of this, his first step in a diplomacy leading to war, devoutly hoping that the friend to whom Mr. Stanmore should refer him might prove equally fierce and hot-headed. He bowed with the studied courtesy assumed by every man concerned either as principal or second in an act of premeditated homicide, and smoothed his hat preparatory to taking leave.

"If you will kindly favour me with your friend's name," said he, in a tone of excessive suavity, "I will wish you good-evening. I fear I have already kept you too long from dinner."

Dick considered for a few seconds,

while he ran over in his mind the sum total of intimates on whom he could rely in an emergency like the present. It is wonderful how short such lists are. Mr. Stanmore could not recall more than half a dozen, and of these four were out of town and one lay ill in bed. The only available man of the six was Simon Perkins. Dick Stanmore knew that he could trust him to act as a staunch friend through thick and thin; but he had considerable scruples in availing himself of the painter's assistance under existing circumstances.

Time pressed, however, and there was nothing for it but to furnish Mr. Ryfe with Simon's name and address in Berners Street.

'Can I see him at once?' asked Tom, strangely anxious to hasten matters, as it seemed to Dick Stanmore, who could not help wondering whether, had the visitor been a combatant, he would have proved equally eager for the fray.

'I am afraid not till to-morrow,' was the reply. 'He has left his painting-room by this time and gone out of town. I cannot ask you to take another journey to-night. Allow me to offer you a glass of sherry before you go.'

Tom declined the proffered hospitality, bowing himself out, as beffited the occasion, with much ceremonious politeness, and leaving the other to proceed to his club-dinner in a frame of mind that considerably modified the healthy appetite he had brought with him half an hour ago.

He congratulated himself, however, before his soup was done, that he had not sent Mr. Ryfe down to the cottage at Putney. He could not bear to think of that peaceful, happy retreat, the nest of his dove, the home of his heart, as desecrated by such a presence on such an errand. 'Come what might,' he thought, 'Nina must be kept from all terrors and anxieties of this kind—all knowledge of such wild, wicked doings as these.'

So thinking, and reflecting, also, that it was very possible with an encounter of so deadly a nature before him they might never meet

again, he knew too well by the heaviness at his heart how dear this girl had become in so short a time—how completely she had filled up that gaping wound in his affections from which he once thought he must have bled hopelessly to death; how entirely he was bound up in her happiness, and how, even in an hour of trouble, danger, and vexation like this, his chief anxiety was lest it should bring sorrow and suffering to her.

He drank but little wine at his solitary dinner, smoked one cigar after it, and wrote a long letter to Nina before he went to bed—a letter in which he told her all his love, all the comfort she had been to him, all his past sorrows, all his future hopes, and then tore this affectionate production into shreds and flung it in the fireplace. It had only been meant to reach her hands if he should be killed. And was it not calculated, then, to render her more unhappy, more inconsolable? He asked himself the question several times before he found resolution to answer it in the practical manner described. I think he must have been very fond of Nina Algernon indeed, although he did not the least know she was at that moment looking out of window, with her hair down, listening to the night breeze in the poplars, the lap and wash of the ebb-tide against the river-banks, thinking how nice it was to have met him that morning, by the merest accident, how nice it would be to see him in the painting-room, by the merest accident again, of course, to-morrow afternoon.

The clock at St. George's, Hanover Square, struck nine as Mr. Ryfe returned to his hotel. He found Lord Bearwarden waiting for him, and dinner ready to be placed on the table.

'Have you settled it?' asked his lordship, in a fierce whisper that betrayed no little eagerness for action—something very like a thirst for blood. 'When is it for, Tom? To-morrow morning? I've got everything ready. I don't know that we need cross the water, after all.'

'Easy, my lord,' answered Tom. 'I can't get on quite so quick as you wish. I've seen our man, and learned his friend's name and address. That's pretty well, I think, for one day's work.'

'You'll meet the friend to-night, Tom!' exclaimed the other. 'Who is he? Do we know him? He's a soldier, I hope?'

'He's a painter, and he lives out of town; so I can't see him till to-morrow. In the mean time, I would venture to suggest, my lord, that I'm recovering from a severe illness, and I've been eight hours without food.'

Tom spoke cheerily enough, but in good truth he looked haggard and out-worn. Lord Bearwarden rang the bell.

'I'm ashamed of myself,' said he. 'Let's have dinner directly; and as for this cursed business, don't let us think any more about it till to-morrow morning.'

They sat down accordingly to good food, well-cooked, good wine, well-decanted: in good society, too, well chosen from a select fraternity usually to be found in this secluded resort. So they feasted and were merry, talking of hounds, horses, hunting, racing, weight for age, wine, women, and what-not. The keenest observer, the acutest judge of his kind, could never have detected that one of these men was meditating bloodshed, the other prompting him to something very like murder as an accessory before the fact.

I will never believe that Damocles ate his supper with less appetite, drank his wine with less zest, for the threatening sword suspended overhead.

CHAPTER XXVI.

BAFFLED.

Mr. Ryfe, we may be sure, did not fail to make his appearance in Berners Street at an early hour on the following day, as soon indeed as, according to Mr. Stanmore's information, there was any chance of finding the painter at home. He felt, and he told himself so more

than once, that he was enacting the part of Mephistopheles, without the supernatural power of that fatal auxiliary, without even a fair allowance of time to lure his Faust to perdition. He had undertaken a task that never would have occurred but to a desperate man; and Tom was desperate, inasmuch as the one hope on which he set his heart had crumbled to atoms. He had resolved to bring together in active hostility two men of the world, versed in the usages of society, themselves perfectly familiar with the code of social honour, that they might attempt each other's lives beguiled by a delusion gross and palpable as the common tricks of any fire-eating conjuror at a fair.

The very audacity of the scheme, however, seemed to afford its best chance of success; and when that success should have been attained, Tom's fancy, overleaping all intermediate difficulties, revelled in the wild possibilities of the future. Of bloodshed he took very little thought. What cared he, with his sad, sore heart, for the lives of those prosperous men, gifted with social advantages that had been denied to himself, and that he felt a proud consciousness he could have put to a far richer profit? Whether either or both were killed, whether either or both came home untouched, his object would equally be gained? Lady Bearwarden's fair fame would equally be di-honoured before the world. He knew that world well, knew its tyrannical code, its puzzling verdicts, its unaccountable clemency to the wolf, its inflexible severity for the lamb, above all, its holy horror of a blot that has been scored, of a sin, then only unparable, that has been 'found out.'

Men love the women on whom they set their affections so differently. For some—and these are great favourites with the sex—attachment means the desire of a tiger for its prey. With others it is the gratification a child finds in a toy. A small minority entertain the superstition of a savage for his idol; a smaller yet offer the holy homage of a true worshipper to his saint. A woman's heart pines for unrivalled

sovereignty—a woman's nature requires the strong hand of a master to retain it in bondage. For this, as for every other earthly state, there is no unalloyed happiness, no perfect enjoyment, no complete repose. The gourd has its worm, the diamond its flaw, the rose its earwigs, and

'The trail of the serpent is over them all.'

So Tom Ryfe, taking time by the forelock, breakfasted at ten, wrote several letters with considerable coolness and forethought, all bearing on the event in contemplation, some providing for a week's absence abroad, at least, smoked a cigar in Lord Bearwarden's bedroom, who was not yet up, and towards noon turned out of Oxford Street to fulfil his mission with Simon Perkins the painter.

His step was lighter, his whole appearance more elate, than usual. The traces of recent illness and overnight's fatigue had disappeared. He was above all foolish fancies of luck, presentiments, and such superstitions—a man not easily acted on by extraneous circumstances of good or evil, trusting chiefly in his own resources, and believing very firmly in nothing but the multiplication table; yet to-day he told himself he 'felt like a winner,' to-day victory seemed in his grasp, and he trod the pavement with the confident port of that pride which the proverb warns us 'goeth before a fall.'

He rang the door-bell and was vaguely directed to proceed upstairs by the nondescript maid-servant who admitted him. The place was dark, the day sultry, the steps numerous. Tom climbed them leisurely, hat in hand, wondering why people couldn't live on the ground-floor, and not a little absorbed in preparation of such a plausible tale as should bring the contemplated interview to a warlike termination.

Turning imaginary periods with certain grandiloquent phrases concerning delicacy of feeling and high sense of honour, he arrived at the second landing, where he paused to take breath. Tom's illness had no doubt weakened his condition, but the gasp with which he now opened

his mouth denoted excess of astonishment rather than deficiency of mind.

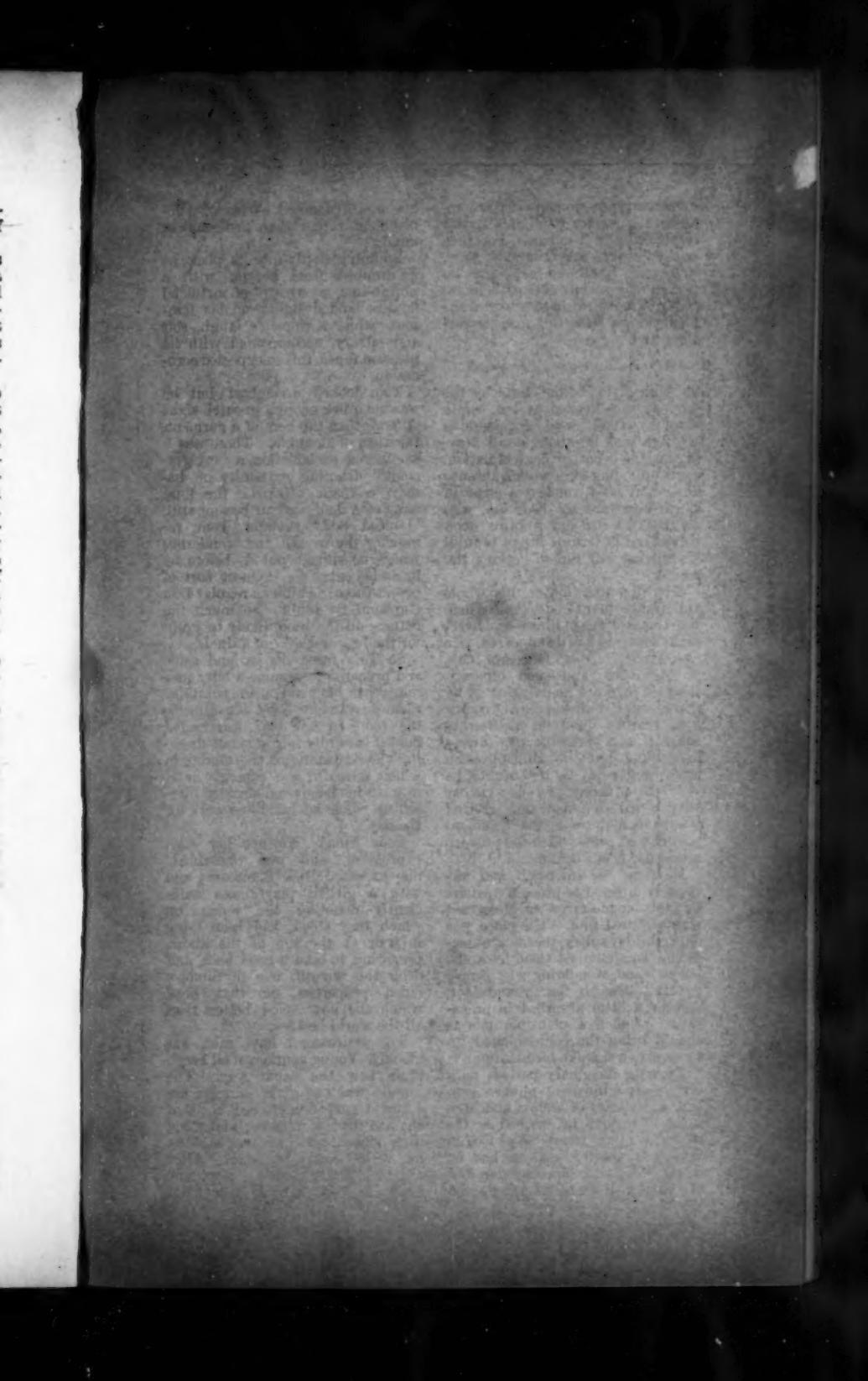
Spinning dexterously into its place, as if dropped from heaven with a plumb-line, a wreath of artificial flowers landed lightly on his temples, while a woman's laugh, soft and silvery, accompanied with its pleasant music this unexpected coronation.

Tom looked up aghast, but he was not quick enough to catch sight of more than the hem of a garment, the turn of an ankle. There was a smothered exclamation, a 'my gracious!' denoting extremity of dismay, a rustle of skirts, the loud bang of a door, and all became still. 'Deuced odd,' thought Tom, removing the wreath and wondering where he should put it, before he made his entrance. 'Queer sort of people these! Painter a regular Don Giovanni, no doubt. So much the better—all the more likely to go in for the fuss and *éclat* of a duel.'

So Tom flung his garland aside and prepared to assume a lofty presence with his hand on the painting-room door, while Nina, blushing to the roots of her hair, barricaded herself carefully into a small dressing closet opening on the studio, in which retreat it was Simon's habit to wash his hands and smarten himself up when he had done work for the day.

Poor Nina! To use her own expression, she was 'horrified.' She expected Dick Stanmore; and with a girlish playfulness sufficiently denoting the terms on which they stood, had been lying in wait at the top of the stairs, preparing to take a good shot, and drop the wreath, one of Simon's faded properties, on that head which she now loved better than all the world besides.

The staircase, I have said, was gloomy. Young gentlemen all brush their hair the same way. The missile was out of her fingers ere a horrid suspicion crossed her that she had made a mistake; and when Tom looked up there was nothing for it but *sauve qui peut!* After all, one head, perhaps, also, one heart, is very like another; but





Drawn by Wilfrid Lawson.]

'The action of the farce amused her at first. It was soon to become interesting, exciting, terrible, even to the verge of tragedy.'

[See 'M. or N.' Chapter XXVI.]

Nina had not yet mastered this, the first element of a rational philosophy, and would have fled, if she could, to the ends of the earth.

In the mean time she took refuge in the little room off the studio, blushing, palpitating, very much ashamed, though more than half amused, but firmly resolved not to leave her hiding-place nor face the visitor, devoutly hoping, at the same time, that he might not stay long.

Simon was in the act of lifting his Fairy Queen into her usual position. She had been dethroned the day before, while he worked at a less congenial task. On his visitor's entrance he put her back with her face to the wall.

Tom made an exceedingly stiff bow. 'Mr. Perkins, I believe?'

'Mr. Ryfe?' replied Simon, in the same half-interrogative tone, with a very stiff bow too.

'I am here on the part of Lord Bearwarden,' said Tom. 'And I have been referred to you by Mr. Stanmore. You expected me, no doubt.'

'I had a communication from Mr. Stanmore an hour ago to that effect,' answered Simon, with a gravity the more profound that he had some difficulty in repressing a smile. The painter was not without a sense of humour, and this 'communication,' as he called it, lay crumpled up in his waist-coat-pocket while he spoke. It ran thus:—

'DEAR SIMON,—I have had a visit from a man named Ryfe that puzzles me exceedingly. He comes from Lord Bearwarden, and they want to fasten some sort of quarrel on me, but why, I cannot imagine. I was obliged to refer him to you. Of course we'll fight if we must; but try and make out what they are driving at, and which is the biggest fool of the two. I think they're both mad! I shall be with you rather later than usual. In the mean time I leave the whole thing in your hands. I don't know Bearwarden well, but used to think him rather a good fellow. The other's an *awful* snob!'

Now I feel that it would be unbecoming on my part to tax a young lady with so mean an act as that of listening; nevertheless, each of the gentlemen in the studio thought proper to speak in so loud and indeed so pompous a voice that Miss Algernon could not avoid overhearing them. It was surely natural, then, that when Mr. Stanmore's name was brought into the colloquy she should have drawn nearer the door of partition, and—well—not tried to avoid overhearing as much as possible of their dialogue.

The action of the farce amused her at first. It was soon to become interesting, exciting, terrible, even to the verge of tragedy.

'That makes my task easier,' continued Mr. Ryfe. 'He has explained, of course, the tendency of my instructions, the object of my visit. It only remains for us to fix time and place.'

'He has explained *nothing*,' answered the painter. 'What is it you complain of, and of what nature is the dispute between Lord Bearwarden and my friend?'

Tom assumed an air of extreme candour, and opened his case artfully enough; but, forgetting that every painter is necessarily a physiognomist, omitted the precaution of turning his back to the light.

'You are on intimate terms with Mr. Stanmore, I believe,' said he. 'Yet in matters of so delicate a nature men of honour keep their own counsel very closely. It is possible you may not be aware of much in his daily life that you would disapprove—much that, under the circumstances, though I am no rigid moralist, appears inexcusable even to me.'

How white that delicate face turned in the next room! How eagerly those dark eyes seemed trying to pierce the blank panels of the door!

'I have known Mr. Stanmore several years,' answered the painter. 'I have seen him almost every day of late. I can only say you must be more explicit, Mr. Ryfe. I do not understand you yet.'

'Do you mean to tell me you are ignorant of an entanglement, a *liaison*, a most untoward and unfortunate attachment, existing between Mr. Stanmore and a lady whose name I fear it will be impossible to keep out of the discussion?'

A wild misgiving, not altogether painful, shot through the painter while he thought of Nina; but, watching the speaker's face, as was his wont, and detecting a disparity of expression between eyes and mouth, he gathered that the man was trying to deceive him in some particular, not speaking the whole truth.

Miss Algernon, who could only listen, trembled and turned sick at heart.

'I think you must be misinformed, Mr. Ryfe,' was Simon's reply.

The other smiled, as pitying such ignorance of social gossip and worldly scandal.

'Misinformed!' he repeated. 'A man is not usually misinformed who trusts his own eyes. A husband cannot be called unreasonably dissatisfied whose wife tells him distinctly she is going to one place, and who sees her an hour after in company with the man he suspects at another. It is no use beating about the bush. You cannot ignore such outrages as these. I wish to spare everybody's feelings — yours, mine, even the lady's, and, above all, my poor friend's; but I must tell you, point-blank, that the intimacy which I have reason to believe existed between Mr. Stanmore and Lady Bearwarden has not been discontinued since her marriage; and I come to you, as that gentleman's friend, on Lord Bearwarden's behalf, to demand the only reparation that can be made for such injuries from man to man.'

The painter opened his eyes, and Tom told himself he had made a good speech, very much to the point. Neither gentleman heard a faint moan in the next room, the cry of a gentle heart wounded to the quick.

'You mean they ought to fight,'

said Simon, still scrutinizing the expression of the other's face.

'Precisely,' answered Tom. 'We must go abroad, I fancy, for all our sakes. Can you be ready to start to-night? Tidal train, you know — nice weather for crossing — breakfast the other side — *demi-poulet* and bottle of moderate St. Julian — needn't stop long for that — Belgian frontier by the middle of the day — no sort of difficulty when once you're across the water. Shall I say to-morrow afternoon, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Monscron? We can all go together, for that matter, and arrange the exact spot in ten minutes.'

Tom spoke as if they were planning a picnic with nothing whatever to dread but the chance of rain.

'Stop a moment,' said the painter. 'Not quite so fast, if you please. This is a matter of life and death. We can't settle it in five minutes, and as many words. You call yourself a man of the world, Mr. Ryfe, and, doubtless, have some familiarity with affairs of this kind, either from experience or hearsay. Do you seriously believe I am going to put my friend up as a target for yours to shoot at without some more definite information, some fuller explanation than you seem inclined to give? Lady Bearwarden has not left her home. My friend has been here every day of late with the utmost regularity. It seems impossible that Lord Bearwarden's suspicions can be well grounded. There must be some mistake, some misconception. Over-haste in a matter like this would be irrevocable, and ruinous to everybody concerned.'

Nina was listening with all her might. Every word of Tom's answer sunk into her heart.

'My friend has left his home,' said he, in a voice of assumed feeling. 'I was at luncheon with them just before the disclosure took place. A happier couple you never saw. Lately married — new furniture — wedding-presents all over the place — delightful house, overlooking the Park. This paradise is now completely broken up. I confess I feel strongly on the subject. I know his lordship intimately. I can appre-

ciate his good qualities. I have also the honour of Lady Bearwarden's acquaintance. The whole affair is extremely painful even to me, but I have a duty to perform and I must go through with it. Mr. Perkins, we are wasting time, let us come to the main point at once."

Simon pondered for a minute, during which he made another narrow scrutiny of Tom Ryfe's face. Then he said, in the tone of a man who comes to a final decision, "I suppose you are right. I fear there is but one way out of it."

It did not escape the painter that, notwithstanding his obvious self-command, the other's countenance brightened far more than was natural at this admission. A duel in these days is a very serious matter to every one concerned, and why should this man seem so truly rejoiced at the progress of an affair that might put his own neck in danger of a halter?

Simon's natural shrewdness, of which, in common with many other simple-minded persons, he possessed a considerable share, warned him there was something more here than appeared at first sight—some mystery of which time alone was likely to afford the elucidation. Time he resolved accordingly to gain, and that without putting the other on his guard.

"But one way out of it," he repeated, gravely. "I wish indeed it could be arranged otherwise. Still this is a serious matter—quite out of my usual line—I cannot undertake anything decided without advice, nor entirely on my own responsibility. My intention is to consult with a friend, an old military man. You shall have my definite answer in a day or two at furthest."

Again watching Mr. Ryfe's face, Simon observed it cloud with dissatisfaction, and his suspicions were confirmed. This fire-eater was evidently only anxious to hurry on the duel with unseemly haste, and make the principals fight at all risks.

"We object to delay," he exclaimed, "we object to publicity.

The thing is plain enough as it stands. You will only complicate it by bringing others into council, and in such a case, surely, the fewer people aware of our intentions the better."

"I cannot help that," answered the painter, in a tone of decision. "My mind is made up, and I see my way clearly enough. You shall have our answer within forty-eight hours at furthest. I repeat this is a matter in which I will not move an inch without the utmost certainty."

Tom began to 'lose his temper. 'Your scruples will bring about a flagrant scandal,' he exclaimed. 'Lord Bearwarden is determined not to be cheated out of his redress. I know his intentions, and I know his character. There will be a personal collision to the disgrace of every one concerned!'

"Then I shall recommend Stanmore to walk about with a thick stick," answered Simon, coolly. "I often carry one myself, Mr. Ryfe," he added, in a tone of marked significance, "and should not scruple to use it on occasion to the best of my abilities."

The painter, though a small slight man, was utterly fearless. Looking Tom Ryfe straight in the eyes, while he made this suggestive observation, the latter felt that nothing was to be gained by bullying, and the game was lost.

"I am surprised," he replied, loftily, but with a ceremonious bow, as reminding the other that his character of ambassador was sacred. "I am disappointed. I wash my hands of the disagreeable results likely to arise from this unfortunate delay. I wish you good-morning, Mr. Perkins. I leave you my address, and I trust you will lose no time in making me acquainted with the result of your deliberations."

So Tom walked down stairs with great dignity, though he smothered more than one bitter curse the while, passing without so much as a glance the rejected garland, lying where he had thrown it aside before he entered on his unsuccessful mission.

Had he been a little less stately

in manner, a little more rapid of movement, he might have overtaken the very lady of whom he obtained a glimpse during his ascent. Nina Algernon was but a few paces ahead of him, scouring along at a speed only accomplished by those who feel that goad in the heart which stimulates exertion, far more effectually than the 'spur in the head,' proverbially supposed to be worth 'two in the heels.' Nina had overheard enough from her hiding-place to make her angry, unhappy, and anxious in the highest degree. Angry, first of all, with herself and him, to think that she could have set her affections on one who was untrue; unhappy to feel she still cared for him so much; anxious to gather from the cold-blooded courtesies of the odious Mr. Ryfe, that a life so dear to her was in danger, that perhaps she might never see Dick Stanmore again. With this ghastly consideration, surged up fuller than ever the tide of love that had been momentarily obstructed, forcing her into action, and compelling her to take immediate steps for ascertaining his perfidy, while, at the same time, she warded off from him the penalties it entailed.

'He'll know I love him then,' thought poor Nina. 'But I'll never see him, nor speak to him, again—never—never. How could he? I wonder why men are so bad!'

To this end, acting on an impulse as unreasonable as it was essentially feminine, she resolved to seek Lady Bearwarden, without delay, and throwing herself on the mercy of that formidable rival, implore advice and assistance for the safety of the man they both loved.

So she fled down stairs and was out of the house like a lapwing, just as Tom Ryfe's warlike colloquy with the painter came to a close.

Simon, missing her, after he had taken leave of his visitor, was not therefore disturbed nor alarmed by

her absence. He accounted for it on the very natural supposition that she had met Dick Stanmore at the door, and pressed him into her service to act as convoy in some shopping expedition, before she sat down to her daily duty as a model for the Fairy Queen, now completed, all but a few folds of drapery, and a turn of the white hand.

Till she came back, however, the great work must remain at a standstill, and Simon had leisure to reflect on his late conversation with Mr. Ryfe, which astonished and perplexed him exceedingly.

Neither his astonishment, nor his perplexity, were decreased, to learn, on Dick's arrival, that he had no knowledge of Miss Algernon's movements—had not met her—had not seen her since yesterday, certainly expected to find her here, and was to the full 'as anxious and uncomfortable as the painter himself.'

'This other business will keep cold,' said Dick, in a great heat and fuss. 'I don't care whether it will or not. It *must*! But we can't have Miss Algernon wandering about London by herself. We can't, at least, I can't be easy for a moment till I know what has become of her. You stay here, Simon, in case she should come back. After all she may be shopping in the next street. I'll rush down to Putney at once, and find out if she's gone home. Don't be afraid. I won't alarm the old ladies. If she's not there I'll be back immediately. If she comes in while I'm gone, wait for me, or leave a line. Old man, if anything goes wrong with that darling, I—I've nothing left to live for in the world!'

Even while he 'spoke, he was on the stairs, and Simon left in the painting-room, shook his head, and pondered.

'They'll never make me believe that cock-and-bull story about Lady Bearwarden. Ah, Nina! I begin to think this man loves you almost as well as I could have done!'





A RUN TO THE SOUTH AFTER CREATURE-COMFORTS.

BAEDEKER; in his excellent 'Guide to Switzerland,' advises you, while climbing a mountain and pausing a moment to take breath, not to look upwards at the distance still to be traversed, but downwards and behind you at what you have already accomplished. The same encouragement is derivable, in a similar way, while travelling. You say to yourself, 'All this has been done; to-morrow we can easily do more.'

Accordingly, at Avignon, we inspect the map of France—the biggest we can find—to chuckle over the interval—and it is enormous—which we have put between distant Paris and ourselves, from seven in the evening till ten next morning, with time to spare. Why, Paris looks quite northern, hyperborean, compared with this place! Mark all the names in our vicinity; Toulon, once expected to convert the Mediterranean into a French lake; Marseilles, on the highway to Egypt and India; the Gulf of Lyons; the coast of Spain. There exists, published some forty years ago, a gastronomic map of France. Instead of the names of places are pictures of their produce for the table. Arles is figured by large smoked sausages; Frontignan, Lunel, and Rivesaltes by bottles and casks of sweet muscat wine; Narbonne by pots of honey; Perpignan and other localities by bunches of grapes, various fruits, and truffled game patties. Here they are, all close by. We have now only to take our walks abroad, as it were, to move on by easy-going, lazy stages, skirting the sea, a barrier in one direction; or to hit upon Spain, a still more effectual check to our further progress that way, from its melancholy paucity of creature-comforts. Truly, to-day's lesson in geography is unusually amusing and inspiriting.

From Avignon the railway wafts you to Nimes, over an arid plain covered with stunted olive-trees, vines, and corn, with small patches of evergreen oaks here and there

taking possession of uncultivated weedy spots. They settle and strike root where no other more highly considered plant thinks it worth while to enter into competition with them. They exist on the leavings of agricultural enterprise, and seem to serve no other purpose than to supply a little brushwood for the fire or the oven. Note well—and take care not to fall asleep before reaching it—that with *some* trains, at the *next* station after Avignon, with others at the third, namely, at Tarascon, to go westwards you branch off from the Grand Paris, Lyons, and Marseilles Railway, taking a new line and changing trains. In doing this you are not plagued about your luggage; the administration relieves you of that trouble; you have only to take care of yourself and your sundry portable effects—things made to be lost, like umbrellas or walking-sticks, or things for private consultation, such as indicatrices, guide-books, sandwich-boxes, and brandy-flasks. We experienced only a short delay; just time enough to stretch our legs, which hardly yet wanted stretching, and to walk in at one door and out at the other through a spacious waiting-room, well arranged for the admission of air and the exclusion of light and heat.

Thence you reach Nimes through a similar tract of country. We passed that city, in spite of the tempting attraction of its very perfect Roman antiquities. No doubt also the fleshpots, the roasts, the fruits, and the wine-casks of the South are obtainable there at least at one good hotel. But with a still unattained object in view it is unwise to halt too frequently on the way; so we left it for some future possibility, submitting in the station to a tiresome delay of fifty-five minutes, which were beguiled by the fag-end of the breeze—now refreshing instead of demolishing—which we had left at Avignon; secondly, by contemplation of the steam-lift which raises and deposits

luggage and merchandize from and in the entrance, a story lower; thirdly, by admiring the multitudinous flat cages, containing hundreds of live tame rabbits, brought by rail—a branch line from Carpentras. See Bradshaw's or other railway map. We never saw so many rabbits, wild or tame, together in our lives.

'Alas! regardless of their doom
The little victims play.' —

For in some of the cages there was just room enough for the exchange of a few mutual pattings and tappings; some also, unconscious of the future, were brushing up their own toilettes. Not a few looked as if they would gladly have partaken of refreshment; but if any had been supplied to them at starting it must have served its purpose long ago. We did not wonder whether we should have rabbit next day at dinner at Montpellier; for it was evident that, for some days to come, rabbit would be on the bill of fare of every town along those lines of railway; and hereabouts they branch into several; but we did wonder where cooks could find a sufficient variety of receipts to make 'rabbit every day' supportable. Those innocents, reared at Carpentras, were neither large nor particularly fat; which would enable a respectable minority of them to be passed off as 'lapins de garenne'—genuine wild rabbits, redolent of marjoram and thyme—if introduced to their interior as soon as room was made for them, and other aromatic herbs, aided by pepper, salt, bay-leaf, and the rest. Somebody at Carpentras must have studied with profit the tennyson pamphlet, 'How to make Ten Thousand (francs) a Year by Rearing Rabbits.' I like rabbit well enough, and don't object to thrifty neighbours; but I hardly think I should like to live in a rabbit-rearing street at Carpentras.

From Nîmes onwards stretches a monotonous plain, whose prevailing colour is bright pea-green, covered with vines and olives, until we reach Montpellier, passing Lunel, a flat, plaster-coloured, un-

healthy-looking village, with one stumpy, stubby church to mark its site; ready uncorked bottles of whose strong, sweet, rich, yellow muscat wine are offered for sale at the station when the train stops. But we warn the traveller to beware of it. It is good at its proper time and place. Here and now, unless liberally watered, it is best eschewed. It is of much too heating and thirsty a quality, however luscious and insinuating, to be prudently indulged in at the present season and latitude. It is an essence extracted by the vine, with the earth's assistance, from the sun, which ought to be reserved for invigorating invalids exposed to the chills and damps of a northern winter.

People noticing the low, flat-topped olive-trees are apt to suppose that they are swept into that shape by the blasts of the mistral. But even though the mistral be capable, as it is, of sweeping anything into shape, it is not answerable for this. The fashion here, for which we may suppose there is good local reason, or at least old local tradition, is to train cultivated trees *en goblet*—into a goblet shape—as is successfully practised in some English gardens with currant and gooseberry bushes and dwarf apple-trees, preventing the crowding of branches in the centre, and admitting all the light and air possible. Here the plan is adopted not merely with fruit trees, but also with the mulberry, grown for its leaves for silk-worms, and with large ornamental shrubs and small flowering trees, as the Judas-tree. For instance, Montpellier exhibits this taste in the lower avenues surrounding three sides of its boasted public walk, the Place du Peyrou. Orange-trees, in boxes, trained *en goblet*, are to be seen in some of the public gardens in Paris.

At Montpellier there seems to exist a considerable and wholesome competition amongst the hotels. Thus we observe, anxiously advertised, an 'Avis' informing travellers that henceforward they will find at the station an omnibus which will conduct them, *directly*,

mind you, and without any roundabouts or circumlocution, to the Hôtel du Tapis-Vert; proprietor M. Rieusset. So much the better for the traveller. We went to that which has the reputation of being the best, the Hôtel Nevet; large, old established, obliging, with very praiseworthy cookery. Monsieur Nevet, a tall old man, now seventy-five years of age, and who served Napoleon I. in some capacity, began life as a courier. From his industry, and doubtless from his merits and ability, the present large establishment arose. In the front court, laid out as a garden, are a handsome cedar of Lebanon (we have those in England, quite as handsome); an evergreen magnolia at least thirty feet high, with a fine straight stem; and a bay-tree the tallest I ever saw, and not easily matched anywhere. This last is pointed out to you as a proof of the mildness of the winter climate. It is a tree with a trunk of equal thickness to a considerable height, more than a yard in circumference. It is but sparsely leaved and twigged, bearing signs of old age, but is said to be recovering a second youth. Anybody would be excusable for exhibiting such specimens with complacency, even if nobody had an interest in implying that where certain trees have thriven so well invalids may go and do likewise. But were I the proprietor, I would not advertise my 'terrasses,' such as they are, as attractions to the *general* public; because, on approaching one of them, you behold a board on which is painted 'Société Particulière'—Private; or, No Admission, even on Business.

Arriving late, after the table d'hôte, we were charged four francs and a half, instead of four francs, for dinner. I make no complaint of this, because late arrivals give extra trouble; but the management would act wisely and rightly in abolishing the half-franc of surcharge, which is anything but a general practice. It is useless as a *fine* for unpunctuality; because his late arrival is not the traveller's fault, but the necessary conse-

quence of the time-tables. And he is sufficiently punished without the fine by getting only remnants and things warmed up, instead of the fresh-cooked articles presented at the general meal.

At breakfast, amongst other good things, Mediterranean species (of mussel, I suppose, or nearly akin to that genus)—a shellfish not found, that I am aware of, in the British seas, was served, uncooked and unopened, to be opened by each guest and eaten like oysters (or as mussels and cockles are occasionally eaten with us, and elsewhere), raw. This is called *clovis*; pronounce *clovise*. Note that, in the South, the final letter of French words is often pronounced when it should not. The other day we heard a pretty little waitress joked by a Parisian buck, because, when presenting a dish of *salsifis*, she called it *salsisse*. But if you want a thing of local production, it is as well to know *how* to ask for it. I am therefore glad to be told that *clovis*, in Southern *patois*, is often called *arselis*, or *arselisse*, expecting shortly to test, on the coast, the value of the information.

We asked to have some of these *clovises* cooked, i.e., hustled in a stewpan without any water. The request was granted at once; and they were very nice eating, in the full sense of the word—choice, delicate. These bivalves, about an inch and a half long (although they are found and sent to table of a larger size), were of a rounder oval than the common mussel; the shell clean and clear, cloudy bluish-grey. We venture to recommend this excellent little molluse to the attention of the Acclimatization Society. If they can establish it here and there along our coasts, they will supply a new pleasure and a new means of earning a living to many Britshers.

From the Botanic Garden of Montpellier, which is the oldest in Europe, having been founded by, or during the reign of Henri IV., we expected great things, but found little more than disillusionments. It is in a sad state of neglect and decline. The public might derive from it

equal benefit and more amusement if it were converted into a well-kept tea-garden. There are venerable evergreens and lanky yuccas, which may be seen in any old pleasure-ground in the South. For the rest, there are plenty of run-up things in pots, which in many private establishments would be barrowed away to make leaf-mould. A large handsome bush of *Rosa macrophylla*, the broad-leaved rose, refused to open its numerous flower-buds. If it does not behave better than that in England, it is hardly worth keeping, unless for its foliage, which is singular and striking, though scarcely so elegant and graceful as that of the Macartney rose. I could not learn the name of a little flowering plant which I had seen used as an edging at Avignon. An old gentleman, some species of 'conservator,' whose occupation of catching small flies with a net (of course for scientific purposes) my presence interrupted, told me that it was a *gazon*—all turf-like, carpety, low-growing plants are popularly called *gazons* in France; that its dwarf habit was the result of culture; that it was a crucifer; that he had forgotten its name if he had ever known it, which he didn't think he had; and that the plants were not labelled with their names because the funds of the garden were very low. I was about to observe that it would not require a cart-load of timber nor a hogsheds of paint to make labels for every plant in the garden, if his fly-catching pursuits allowed him the time, when he urged his occupations in the conservatory (empty) to escape from further catechizing.

The real and favourite lion of Montpellier is the Place du Peyrou, a parallelogram-shaped architectural garden, surrounded by stone balustrades, with plenty of stone seats in and around it. At the further end is an elevated sort of Temple of the Waters for the supply of the town, received from a handsome aqueduct on lofty arches. The platform on which this temple stands commands a view whose interest depends on the clearness of the atmosphere. The sea and the

Pyrenees ought thence to be visible. We saw neither; which, however, did not make us less grateful for the shade and the breeze of the Place du Peyrou. In the middle is a spirited bronze equestrian statue of Louis XIV., which struck us as being considerably superior to the average run of such effigies.

While lingering on the steps which lead to the Temple, we were accosted by a woman looking like a confidential nurse, who asked, hurriedly and feverishly, if we had seen a couple of little children 'hauts comme ça,' 'so high,' indicating their small stature with her hand. 'No,' we answered. 'Why? Have you lost them?' 'Yes; depuis deux heures'—for the last two hours. And she hurried away to continue her search.

What had she been up to during the last two hours, leaving the two small children to take care of themselves in a public garden? Who were the children, French or English? Townspeople's babes, or strangers strayed in a foreign city? In her fright, she gave us no time to inquire. But we looked after this particularly trustworthy guardian, remembering Hood's broad but truthful woodcut, 'Accustomed to the Care of Children'—a nurse-maid flirting with a soldier, while baby, unnoticed, falls into a pond. Woe betide poor children confided to the charge of 'very superior persons,' who make nurse-maids the opportunity for following their own devices! I am far from saying that none such are good, but there are many of unknown badness; and it is the concealment with which their badness is covered which makes them all the more dangerous. Our babes are like our domestic animals; they cannot, or dare not, complain of the wrongs they suffer. And for maltreating or straying babes in the wood, there is often little choice between a cruel uncle and a confidential nurse.

Of course, as we left Montpellier next day, we never knew what became of the children and their model protectress; whether they were found immediately afterwards, or whether they remain missing to

the present hour; whether nurse whipped them, and made them hold their tongues, except to say that they had been wicked children, and that the fault was *theirs*; or whether they spoke out before she could whip them, and the parents sent her off with a month's wages and an excellent character. Many of these little incidents of travel remind one of the truth of Alphonse Karr's remark that actual biography has no sequel, real romance no third volume. In daily life, the only *dénouement* we meet with is the grave; and that is often an unsatisfactory and incomplete *dénouement*. As to the two little children in question, we comforted our sympathies with the probability, that, at worst, they might only have to spend a few weary hours under the protection of a commissaire of police, before being restored to their parents' arms.

Leaving the Place du Peyrou, a few steps to the left down hill, and then a few steps in a street branching off from the Boulevard to the right [I like to find my own way about a town which I am visiting for the first time, instead of taking a guide or a commissaire, and suppose the reader may like to do the same], will bring you to the cathedral, now under repair, and not worth the trouble of going to but for its very extraordinary porch—so massive in its ugliness as to command respect. Two cylindrical pillars, which cannot be less than five feet in diameter, and as tall as the church itself, support a little roof, which, at that elevation, looks much like the top of a four-post bed. Instead of the superstructure overloading the base, the stout supports look as if they wondered why they were placed there to do so little work.

By mounting the steep lane in front of the cathedral—Montpellier is full of ups and downs—you once more reach the central town, with its narrow streets and still narrower foot-pavements. You can hardly fail to fall upon two covered markets, an old one and a new, the latter redolent of cheese, salt pork, and the refuse of vegetables under-

going cold infusion in water, with which the pavement, in not a few places, is drenched for the purpose of uncleanness. Barring the smells, this modern market is a useful compendium of the diet, costumes, and customs of the country, to be studied at leisure under shelter from the sun.

We drove first along a dusty road or rather lane, between two stone walls, to a summer resort on the banks of the Ley, where you can see a little green grass and drink Seltzer water corrected with liquids of stronger potency. Fresh and clear running water being scarce in these parts, the youth of Montpellier have made of this place a swimming-school, where they can bathe first and breakfast afterwards in trellised birdcages overlooking the stream, or the pools of what is a stream when it flows. And, in fact, this little bit of water and verdure render the restaurant on the banks of the Ley refreshing in every sense of the word. Thence, escaping the walls, but not the dust, we proceeded to the cemetery, full of thrifty cypresses and prosperous weeds. The latter in places were completely laden with clusters of small cream-coloured snails. They were dormant for the time in consequence of the drought, the soil being then baked as hard as a rock. Where rank herbage grows, snails may be expected anywhere; and we should not have noticed them, but that we saw the very same snails exposed for sale, uncooked, by *small* saucerfuls, as if they were very choice delicacies, in the above-mentioned covered market. When I say the same, I mean in kind, not asserting that those identical snails, intended for table use, came from the cemetery. If indeed they had, they would have been none the worse, but the better, according to the theories of natural philosophers. We must have phosphates to invigorate us, wherever they come from. It is said that not a little bonedust, used to stimulate the growth of corn, has been procured from battle-fields. From the same source has been obtained animal charcoal, for refining sugar. And,

more frequently years ago, perhaps, than now, many a sheep, before making the butcher's acquaintance, has known the taste of churchyard grass.

We return, to seek shelter from dust and light. But though the glare of these light-buff southern towns pains the eye of the passenger, it helps them to radiate the sun's heat and tends to keep the inmates cool. Walls in hot weather should be coloured white outside, on the same principle as we select for the dog-days a white hat, a white suit of clothes, and a white umbrella. Were all the houses black or dark chocolate-brown, during a southern summer their inhabitants would be almost baked to death. There is a *côte rotie*, famous for its wine; we can conceive an unfortunate *ville rotie* acquiring a notoriety for human pities.

When you have no intention of making a sojourn in a place, it is astonishing how soon you have done with it. As our objects lay beyond Montpellier, we had very speedily taken its measure. Two days' observation and two nights' reflection told us as much about it as we wanted to know at present. We departed, quite content with the Hôtel Nevet, and only hoping we might never fare worse. But it is after leaving Montpellier that hospitality tribulations begin. There is choice enough to satisfy any who are not over fastidious. For instance, we heard much in favour of the Hôtel Bannel and its cookery. It comprises (and I fancy began as) a restaurant, where you can déjeuner or dine, without taking up your abode in the house. Its fame commenced with some successful mode of dressing potatoes, or other unpretending article of food, and spread as it deserved to do. If you want a small dinner, composed of a few dishes perfectly served—and those are the dinners we rejoice to partake of—especially if you wish it to comprise some good sample of southern cookery, there, they say, is the place to go. Nevertheless, we can only speak of what we found; and not having tested B.'s

cuisine, are bound to repeat that the Hôtel Nevet's is very satisfactory.

From Montpellier to Céte, by railway, you skim over a sea of the summerly pea-green leaves of the vines. The season and the weather may have something to do with that tint, as also the variety of grape principally cultivated; for different kinds of vines differ greatly in the general tint and tone of their foliage, which becomes most apparent when they are grown in large masses, as here, and over extensive tracts. As we approach the coast, appear tree mallows, vegetable witnesses who, from John o'Groat's House to the Mediterranean, tell you that the sea is not far distant. Speculators, whom some consider wild, will tell you that *all* plants, as well as animals, have sprung from aquatic ancestors. Certainly there exists a coterie of plants, like this tree mallow, the fig, and others, which delight to linger close to the shores of their native element.

We choose a train, 11.42, in the morning, which, instead of carrying us straight on, allows us to loiter more than an hour at Céte, giving us an opportunity, if we liked the look of it (which we don't), to decide on stopping there at some future time. In a parenthesis it is only just and due here to note the great politeness and attention of the railway officials along the whole of this line or lines, the Chemins de Fer du Midi. Were we to go to Céte, we should try the Hôtel Barillon, strongly recommended by one who knows it. But we hope to find some more inviting seaside residence along this line of coast.

From Marseilles eastward, on the Mediterranean shores, there are many inviting spots, charmingly situated, where a stranger would willingly linger for a while, if he could only find inn accommodation. Some of these we know to be without it; in others it still remains a matter to be ascertained, as far as ourselves are concerned. In several where there is now good reception for travellers, there was little or nothing not very long ago. But

where the picturesque, healthy, and convenient site exists, and Nature has given what is required, the enterprising settler can always take apartments, or better, a house, and gradually collect his own proper comforts around him. This system has been the origin of several now celebrated winter retreats. Quiet families, with whom the health of one or more of their members may be a paramount consideration, will care little about what is called 'society.' If they like a place well enough, or find it suits them well enough, to spend three or four months in it, they naturally return to it at the recurring season. If others chose to follow their example or not, is to them a matter of little moment. They have found what they wanted; sunshine, shelter, pure air, and pleasant scenery.

But from Marseilles, westward, such spots are rare, independent of the question of hotels or lodgings-houses. As yet, we know of none, although we have looked out sharp for them. Places that promise well on the map, when seen, at once tell you they won't do, even with the passing glance you catch of them from the railway. If there were ever such good hotels, you would never select them as watering-places. Along part of the way, in fact, from Montpellier to Perpignan, the railway demonstrates the melancholy truth. It skirts, or runs between, the étangs, ponds, lagunes, salines, and salt-pans, which separate the Mediterranean from terra firma. They are curious, but far from beautiful to behold. Hereabouts, the shores of the midland sea are not only depressed but almost depressing. Square miles of shallow, sometimes stagnant water, make a sorry fringe to the bright salt sea.

The natives, who have no help for it, bear the disappointment and cross the barrier as best they can. Sometimes, they must and do get sea-bathing; but we do not envy them the means by which they attain that privilege. It seems a paradox that the sea should shut you out from itself; nevertheless, such is the fact. Montpellier ad-

vertises, for strangers, and frequents itself, the Bains de Mer de Palavas, eleven kilomètres, or about seven miles, distant, informing the world that, from the 1st of July, the omnibus service will commence from Daumont's, letter of carriages, Place de la Comédie, at moderate prices, with six departures per day. Such numerous 'trains' would not start unless there were customers. And it appears that at Palavas there are villas, chalets, cabins, tents, with every desirable convenience, as near to the sea as the lagoon permits, which you have to cross before you get at the real, unmistakeable, though tideless beach—such a genuine beach as we are accustomed to in most of the watering-places of the United Kingdom.

Frontignan, again, famous for its perfumed muscat wine, promises well on paper, in the immediate vicinity of two lakes and the sea. In the widely-circulated 'Messager du Midi' you read of its capabilities for marine recreation. You are informed of the opening, on the 15th of June, of the Grand Hôtel and Café Restaurant, kept by Goudard the elder, the concessionaire of the Bains de Mer and of the sporting grounds appertaining to them—where, during the season, there must be snipe and waterfowl, and, perchance, even a little fever. What awakens one's attention is the announcement that there is a 'succursale,' or branch house, on the beach, for persons who wish to take their meals there—implying that the hotel itself cannot be on the beach, nor very near it—board and lodging, seven francs per day, and upwards, including your transport to the beach and your bathing-box. M. Goudard has neglected nothing to give his hotel all the 'comfortable' which one finds in a first-class establishment. Nota. One is begged to write beforehand in order to secure rooms.

How athirst the southerners must be for salt sea-breezes, if there is a likelihood of your arriving at Frontignan and not finding a resting-place! On leaving Vio-Mireval, the station next before Frontignan, we anxiously strained our expectant

eyes. We saw marshes, muddy streams, rushes, coarse grass, bridges crossing sluggish canals, and, wherever there was quite dry land, vines. Here and there, on the banks of the dykes, were what looked like thatched cottages without walls, and consequently without doors and windows. It was as if somebody had taken off the roofs of a village and laid them flat ' promiscuously' about the grass. The rooms, if rooms there were, must be sunk in the ground, which would, in all likelihood, introduce them to the water. Were these marine villas in a new style of architecture adapted to the climate of the region, or were they merely salt-houses for storing the produce of those interminable salt-pans? We did not stop the train to get out and see, but afterwards learned that the latter conjecture was correct. And then appeared Frontignan. That this life should be so full of undechceptions! It was impossible to mistake it for a pretty place, or for a place that by any possibility could ever be pretty. A dull, flat, marshy, dilapidated-looking village, with a ditch that somebody had scooped out with a fire-shovel, between a couple of hedgeless mud banks, to keep out the ooze and slime of the lagoon, and allow a boat to reach the sandy tongue of beach, beyond which lies the real sea. In the lagoon lay an unfortunate canoe, drawing perhaps nine inches of water, hopelessly stuck fast aground, and stranded. Bains de Mer, indeed! including mud baths, gratis—mud baths enough to bemire and besmear, in their capacious slough, the whole population of France. Ting, bell; and whistle, engine! roll, wheels, we have seen enough. We will spend our seven francs per day, and upwards, for board and lodging, at some other maritime paradise, if such is to be found. But how lucky we didn't take tickets to Frontignan, on the chance of spending an interesting day there, especially as the grapes are not yet ripe!

To Cette, hard by, the sea makes a somewhat nearer approach. We actually saw the breakers. They

happened to be small that day, but are by no means despicable upon occasion. At the back of the town is a massive isolated hill, so high that donkey assistance would be acceptable to mount it, and sprinkled with villas and country boxes. It is not wooded enough to be pretty or picturesque. On the top stands something that looks like a restaurant, whence the view must be extensive, if not fine. The surrounding country does not supply the materials for a grand panorama however wide. Cette is ill-famed for its dirtiness; we did not find it dirtier than its neighbours. The inhabitants complain of a want of fresh water, visitors of its distance from the sea, so that in no sense is it a good watering-place. It is a famous place of business, nevertheless; but as we did not go to it for wines or spirits, nor to cheapen oils, sardines, vermicelli, corks, or capers, we turned our backs on it without regret.

With Cette fled all our hopes of fresh sea-breezes hereabouts. The railway continues to tantalise you by offering them to your lips and then snatching them away. Agde is not in the equivocal position of 'one foot on land and one on shore'; it has both feet firmly fixed on land. Narbonne the same. It is eight long kilomètres from the Mediterranean. Of what use is such a place to people who want to be within hearing and sight of billows while they are eating their shrimps and bread and butter (or the local substitute for them) at breakfast? Farther on it is ten times worse. Of La Nouvelle, a place doing a good stroke of coast-trade business, and actually containing a population, I can easily give you an idea. Take a sandy desert; stir into it as much water as will bring it nearly to the consistency of a quicksand; let it stand to settle and form one or two little channels for the water to drain; scoop and scrape out one of them into the semblance of a canal; drop human dwellings by the side of it, opposite to a small cluster of masts; build a new church there and a railway station; cause a few douaniers, soldiers, and sailors

to crawl about cautiously, as if they were afraid of sinking in the quagmire, and you have La Nouvelle. To complete the picture, in one direction, on the far horizon, stick a few white spots, to indicate that coasting-vessels may there be sailing in an open sea, and in the other direction pleasant-looking mountains, so distant as to be useless and hopeless, telling cruel tales of the freshness and verdure which are not here.

Thence to Salces, past Leucate station (which is not a station, but a point where omnibus trains stop; what for, they know better than I do)—to Salces is the same theme with variations. The rocky promontory of Leucate gives hopes which it does not fulfil. It is an utter solitude. Wayside human habitations are very few and far between. One dilapidated, lonely farm, approached by an avenue of weatherbeaten almond-trees, struck me as a retreat to which a criminal pursued by justice might retire in perfect confidence. At Rivesaltes (another low, unbaked-bread coloured, small town, celebrated for its delicious sweet white wine, of the same class as those of Lunel and Frontignan) you have left the lagoons behind, and are again in the midst of a vine-covered plain. For seaside pleasures we must hit upon a different geological formation. The next station after Rivesaltes is Perpignan, the chef-lieu, or as we should say the county town, of the department of the Pyrénées Orientales. At the above places, I do not speculate about the inn accommodation, though the thought of what it may be makes me shudder; because if any generous benefactor were to present us with a house and grounds there, to improve and arrange according to our own devices, and *not* sell but inhabit and enjoy, we should respectfully decline the boon, preferring a chamber surrounded by pleasant objects to a mansion in a medium of unpleasantness.

At Narbonne was a halt for change of train, not long enough to be tiresome, but long enough to stretch your legs. It is the junction of the

railways proceeding to Céte from the different directions of Bordeaux and Perpignan—the southern meeting-point of the east, the west, and the utmost south; for at Perpignan are diligences which carry you across the Pyrenees into Spain. You can go still further south, by railway, in France, namely, as far as Port Vendres, whence the railway may proceed onwards into Spain one of these days; but at present, there, you are in a blind alley, a cul de sac, the bottom of a bag. There is a carriage-road as far as Banyuls-sur-Mer. If you wish thence to pass into the Peninsula, you must do it in a boat, on mule-back, or on foot. At both those places, Port Vendres and Banyuls, of which you shall hear more anon, we are promised a bit of real sea.

Of Perpignan I have little to say, and should be glad to say even less. Outside the station was a great bustle, partly caused by a competition of diligences for Spain, partly by inn-touters and their omnibuses. In a moment of economical weakness, from which the wisest and the wealthiest are not exempt, we had let fall a half-formed intention of going to a second-class hotel, and were instantly taken at our word, caught up, and carried off. Perpignan, they say, is too near to Spain to be comfortable, according to northern notions. Other places along the Pyrenees are just as near the frontier, and yet are clean and comfortable; but they have less frequent communication and little old-established familiarity with their ultramontane neighbours. They don't adopt their peculiarities in eating, drinking, house-building, and bed-making. Great caution, it is stated generally, is to be exercised in choosing a hotel at Perpignan. We had been 'sent on' with orders to go to the Hôtel Bosc, and it was in some degree owing to our human perversity in not choosing to be sent on too often that, to our sorrow, we did not go to the Hôtel Bosc. The reader will profit by our mistake, and prefer Bosc, where at least you can breathe, as it looks out on the fresh green grass and trees of the ramparts, to intra-

mural dens and dungeons. And, to embitter our too-late repentance, we are assured Bos's charges are by no means high.

Whether in consequence of the stifling atmosphere at the bottom of deep wells and ravines called courts and streets, or other unseen but not unfelt cause, we slept badly, all of us, that night, rose early, and resolved to make our escape forthwith. Luckily, in the diligence that was to start for Amélie-les-Bains at 11 A.M., there still were vacant places not absolutely where, but exactly in the number, we wanted; some below, some above, some behind, some in front. Triumphing in the discovery, I did not leave the office till the receipt for those places was safe in my pocket. We should not be, as we wished, together, but we should be embarked in the same ponderous, hospitable, terrestrial Noah's Ark, traversing something less monotonous than a dull, flat plain, sometimes watery sometimes leafy, but, of whatever kind, apparently interminable in extent. We should soon be fairly amongst the hills, and be rising, now imperceptibly, now quite perceptibly, to the respectable elevation of more than seven hundred feet above the sea level.

It was hot, although anywhere else, and after a better night's rest, we might not have complained of it. We had suffered more from heat between Boulogne and Paris than along the whole distance from Paris to Perpignan. The night-flight from Paris to Avignon was a great success; but in Perpignan, with its narrow, crooked streets and its lofty houses, whose upper stories stretch forward to shake hands with opposite neighbours, we were almost stifled. We perfectly appreciated the luxury to the inhabitants of ice being retailed there at ten centimes the kilo, or less than a halfpenny per pound avoirdupois, and showing at least one advantage of the vicinity of mountains in a warm climate. I went to the market for strawberries, to moisten our lips during the ride to Amélie, and there saw, amongst other strange things, fowl-butchers, of whom you could buy the half,

the quarter, and even less, of a fowl. The blood drawn in killing the said fowl was also offered to a hungry public for sale.

We are in a strange country, amongst a strange race, with blood in their veins having no affinity to our own. Their complexion and the expression of their countenances are alien to what we have been accustomed to. Happily not 'a lion,' as the parish clerk made it when he read 'I am a *lion* to my mother's children.' While waiting for the horses to join the diligence, the time is beguiled by what threatens to be a fight between a porter and one of the superior authorities of the office. Though French is spoken to passing strangers, the interlocutory language is Catalan patois, a mixture of Spanish, Italian, Latin, Arabic, and French, with the addition of sundry native and imported roots. Catalan, we are told, was once an official language under the kings of Arragon. Works of considerable historical value still exist in Catalan; but as the Arragonese dynasty has passed away, sharing the fate of the kings of our Saxon Heptarchy, I have never learnt Catalan, and never shall; consequently I did not understand the compliments that passed between the porter and his employer. The former, however, after ceasing personal strife, struck work pantomimically, and sat down on his barrow with an expression of face which said that it was great forbearance on his part not to cut the other's throat with the sharp-edged, sharper-pointed, gay-handled Catalan knife he had in his pocket.

Luckily he was not the only porter in the world, nor even in Perpignan. In spite of the want of his visible aid, the luggage was piled on the top of the diligence, and we drove to the post-office to receive the letters. There, a brother porter climbed up to me and demanded a tip for his assistance. I offered him half a franc as a sufficient extra to the office charges; but he made a face so piteous, so remonstrative, so appellant to my feelings as a gentleman, without the least insolence, that I immediately changed it for a franc. The franc was received with

another look, the same in kind, though less intense in degree; so, remembering the worthies of his class in Italy (who, if you give them five francs will ask for ten, and if you give them ten will insist upon twenty, and who acknowledge in their confidential and impulsive moments that they are 'mai contenti,' never content), I told him to be satisfied and go about his business. He did the one if he was not the other.

Immediately there followed, to make a like claim on a fellow-passenger, the combative, pantomimic, work-striking man of burthens, who had no more thought of striking for the diligence than I have of striking for 'London Society.' My companion, a lieutenant in the French navy, gives five sous. Grimaces, beating those addressed to me hollow, because *these were* mischievous; immense indignation. 'How was a man, with bread to earn, to live like that? Take that? That enough? Never; no, never, till the Grand Never. Take them back yourself,' and that not in Catalan, but in quite intelligible French. The sous were dashed, not to the ground, but on the board sustaining the leather apron. Not to prolong the dialogue, in which urgency of extortion was met by equal firmness of resistance, at the moment when our steeds were starting, the sous *were* taken with the thankful remark, 'Never will I work for you again.' It

would seem that this industrious Catalan earns his living by refusing to work.

Along the road (this being the middle of June) they are already cutting wheat and oats. There are even lands ploughed after carrying the harvest. Green peas are over, all but a few exceptionally tardy samples; but there are plentiful supplies at table of broad beans, French beans, strawberries, and cherries; other fruits are not yet ripe, but will be soon. In the south, in the plain, I have nowhere seen either currant, gooseberry, or raspberry-bushes—nor windmills. As we advance, although now fairly in the mountain, we are still surrounded by olive-trees, vines, and other southern crops. The hedges show bright scarlet-bloomed pomegranates, with occasional patches of aloes and clumps of that innocent-looking but formidable stop-thief, the Christ's Thorn, *Rhamnus palmarus*. There are ilexes where there is room for them; and one or two wayside cork trees are seen, but they cannot be allowed to count. We reach the Baths of Amélie—which appear a perfect paradise after windy Dauphiny and flat, dusty Languedoc—about five in the afternoon, allowing us each to rinse ourselves well in hot mineral water, to dine, and go to bed with the cocks and hens, with a private band of blackbirds and nightingales to serenade us.

E. S. D.

(To be continued)

POPPIES IN THE CORN;
OR, GLAD HOURS IN THE GRAVE YEARS.—No. VIII.
BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE HARVEST OF A QUIET EYE,' &c.

AN AUTUMN WALK.

IF dull Care, which sits behind the horseman (as most people have heard at least once in their lives), can be eluded, and if the heart be light, and the step springy, and the brow clear, and the internal machinery well oiled; and life, just

then, a glad thing both for mind and body—under these propitious circumstances there is hardly any recreation to be placed above a good walk, hardly any poppy which I would rather gather out of the long rows of busy days. In company;

thus it is delightful: alone; this has also its delights. *Alone*, however, I repeat, it must be:—if that weary-faced, brow-seamed companion, of which I spoke just now, be likely to draw near, and take your arm, and, regardless of with-your-love, or by-your-leave, insist on interspersing every incident, view, object, pause, or progress, with his joy-killing remarks, the very last thing which I would recommend for your recreation would be a walk alone (so-called) through whatever scenery.

‘One morn I put my heart to sleep,
And to the lanes I took my way.’

Thus one writes; but how useless was this make-believe; how vain to slip, however stealthily, out of the back door, leaving Care, dull Care (you thought), asleep in the parlour. You have hardly gone a hundred yards, before (with that odious matter-of-course familiarity) his arm is locked within your own, and you are deep in busy, anxious conversation with him. You stop at a stone set all over with vivid dwarf moss, and tiny turquoise forget-me-not. You pause to admire and love it; but lo! it vanishes from you soon in an abstraction, even while you bend over it, for your ill companion is plying you with anxious considerations as to how that pile of bills at home may be diminished, and a fresh, free start made on a better plan. Or you are leaning on a fence, looking through trees at the gleam of a wide shallow river; the cool that comes from it always is delicious to your heated brow; the crisp brattle of the ever-rushing waters brings lulling and refreshment to your brain. It is but for a moment; the plashing murmur has passed from your regard, the grey, leaden gleam among the alders is not perceived any longer, even though you are still looking at it; the eyes are fixed, but the brain has been called off. ‘Ah!’ that malicious comrade has whispered, ‘How lonely your life will be now all hope of winning *her* is gone!’ And the picture that you drew a veil over, and thought to forget for at least a while in your walk; the

picture of that face whose very sweetness is your inexpressible sadness, is, in a moment, with cruel distinctness, held before your thought.

‘Thus did she look, on such a day,
And such the fashion of her hair;
And thus she stood, when, stooping low,
You took the bramble from her dress,
And thus she laughed and talked, whose “No”
Was sweeter than another’s “Yes.”’

Ah! no wonder that the cool murmur and the cool gleam faded quite from your mind, and that your brow sets, and your head is bent, and your eyes moodily fixed on the road, as you turn with a sigh to pursue your unrefreshing walk with your inexorable and unshakeable companion. You should not have done it, you know; the very last thing that you should have devised by way of recreation and diversion of thought was this walking tour, alone, but indeed with this kill-joy comrade! ‘*Laid your heart to sleep*, had you? ‘Tis too light a sleeper, and however you stole away on tiptoe, there it is, after the first few minutes, standing up in the crib, and that wearying perpetual wail has begun again.

‘While thus I went to gladness fair,
I had but walked a mile or twain,
Before my heart woke up again,
As dreaming she had slept too late;
The morning freshness that she viewed
With her own meaning she endued,
And touched with her solicitude
The natures she did meditate.’

No; the solitary walk is but a slow and refined torture under circumstances like these. If troubled with a mental toothache, and desirous of a lull, you must take some other pursuit as your prescription. Gardening or carpentering; these are both admirable for quite absorbing the mind until Care’s ever-tolling bell at first is muffled and presently is unheard. At least this is true of minor worries, and matters which are more anxieties than sorrows; making a bee-house or altering a garden-bed won’t make you forget for even a while that you have buried your bonny boy, or your life’s hope, or that you have committed a murder. But the process is an admirable one for taking

your mind clean away from the depressing routine of the office in which you have to sit all the long spring and summer days; or from the contention of philosophy, history, mathematics, &c., in the head of the intending double-class man.

Yes, avoid the lonely, even though lovely, walk, if you cannot really be alone; as you would avoid the roasting yourself at a slow fire. If, however, things are so with you that you can for those days count reasonably (amid the changes and chances that yet must always peril it) upon the gay, blithe boy-heart again, there is, I repeat, nothing in the way of recreation more intensely, exquisitely enjoyable to the man with an eye for seeing, a mind for appreciating, and a heart for loving, than a leisure walk through fair scenery.

Let me recall such a walk, one link in that pleasant chain yeblet a walking tour. Half of the chain welded with that of a dear companion; half fashioned in solitude. Care, dull Care; ah, I had eluded thee then! I had gone, and left thee no address; the wrinkles were ironed out of my brow; the song of younger days welled up spontaneously now and then. I need hardly say that one would not wish it always, not very often, but it is, as I have said or sung before in these idle papers, an exhilarating feeling to have sometimes, the feeling that for a few weeks you have *nothing to do*, a gap in a life of incessant occupation, if not of hard work; a blank space in the close-written pages. Nothing to do but to please and amuse yourself. I really think that of all people who can enter the most fully into the relief and delight of such an occasional surprise the parson is the one. However he loves his labour, it is a thing always with him, and its influence must necessarily have a strong depressing element, from the fact which is obvious—that so much of it must be, or must appear, labour in vain. Then his whole life (if he be a faithful servant) is one of self-denial: he has not, as the business man has, any time certainly to call his own; much of his work lies in

the evening, when others are entitled to rest; and Sunday brings few vacant hours to him. He is not his own, nor expects, nor wishes to be: he is a servant first of that Master the least ray of whose helping and approving love brightens his heart really more than all the glad sunshine of any world's joy could do: and he is also the servant of every one, the greatest and least, the oldest and youngest, in the parish: he has a concern in the concerns of every man, woman, and child in it. They are his family, under his care; and what with his consciousness of his own inadequacy and shortcomings, and what with his anxiety for them, and continual apparent failure in his work for them, you will allow that, though peace underlie it, there is yet much care in his lot. The business man achieves so much day by day; the work is done, and successfully done, so far as it goes. But fancy if he had to keep accounts, very few of which would have any reasonable likelihood of being correct, and do work a great deal of which was next to certain to end in failure: to number that which next time would be found wanting; to make straight that which a week after would in all probability have started aside into crookedness again: and then grant that there would be wear and tear in such work. Thus you will be able to enter sympathetically into my elasticity of spirits, and light springiness of foot, as I sally forth, on a warm autumn morning; breakfast over; the long day before me; forth from my cozy little lodgings just under Tintern Abbey, for a walk (a first visit) to the Wyndcliff, and to Chepstow Castle. Sweet Tintern! I will not speak of thee in an episode, I, thy lover, am purposed to pen one day a whole paper in thy praise. I pass thee lingeringly, lovingly, reverently; as I turn my back on thee and wend my way by the upper road, old and impracticable for wheels, towards the Wyndcliff. Often I face back to regard thee, changing in aspect as I follow the path and ascend the hill; at last thou art far below me, grey with thy green larch against the

coloured hillside; a few steps more—walking backward—and I have lost thee. Then I am able to go on merrily, with undistracted mind, towards the grandeur and beauty which I am delightfully anticipating.

Certainly a lovely bit of old unused road. Through the hedge I spy the dry bed of a mountain streamlet, the banks moss-covered, and fern drooping from the green stones. Far from the dust and drought, green, doubtless, all the year, under the roof of clematis, honeysuckle, and wild rose, shut in by nut and maple; how quiet a fairy valley! I dare say the squirrel races across it, and bead-eyed mice flit, rather than move, about it; and the chaffinch gives the word for the wild hyacinths to ripen into blue: and the silver laugh of the willow-wren peals above it, and sprinkles the leaves with that light rain of sound; and, for ruder noises there is the scolding of the blackbird if any obnoxious intruder should move his ire. And soft winds sigh through it, and there is the patter and rustle and rush of showers above it; and in the still autumn days the slight excitement of a nut, making its way through the yellowing leaves. What a secluded miniature dell! No wonder the tall or drooping plumes of ferns keep so lush and green, and last on through the winter, which levels the hollow with a smooth sward of snow. Or sometimes, after a thaw or long rains, a twisting cataract rushes down it, whirling away the sodden leaves which thought to have rested there in that long fosse for ever in peace. Then the hedges are lit with the scarlet hips and deeper haws, and some branches are dressed with clustered wealth of blue-purple sloes. I leave this tiny glade with some regret, remembering, however, that, after all, it is but the first course of the day's feast. And now I have attained to a considerable height, and looking back, can descry some distant black, stern-looking ranges of Welsh hills appearing above their wood-clad kin that shut me round beneath in the valley.

A quiet stretch of cultivated table-land; a farm at which I ask my way,

and now I am close to the moment which, for this famous view, will change anticipation into memory. I am just above the point; approaching it by the upper road, I drop down upon it, and get the panorama suddenly complete, not having forestalled it by driblets in ascending. I pause for a moment: there is always a reluctance to turn a keen future enjoyment into a however delightful past experience. I have this feeling especially with a new poem of Tennyson's. Still no doubt a possession is more valuable than a hope: let me descend and secure this.

And this is the view from the Wyndcliff. How long have I been here, still, wrapt in speechless admiration, and deep content? A grand and lovely view indeed. A double-tier balcony of stone ended my descent through the trees, and on this I am sitting. A bad head is mine for looking down steep places, and I lean very gingerly forward to look over the parapet. A sheer and lofty cliff standing out of the wood which lies at its feet, and stretches down, a marvel of colours, hues, tints, to a green strip of pasture meadows, and the winding Wye. How one thinks at once of the feeling of toppling over, losing the clutching hold, and then down, down, and the crash into the sea of trees below, worse than that fall of the youth from the top of a fourteen-storied house at Edinburgh, of whom it is related that his grave meditations resolved themselves into outspoken comments on his way down. A gentleman standing in a balcony about half-way up the house heard the solemn remark as he sped by, 'Eh! what a elite I'll get!' How lovely, this looking down on the foliage, masses of all colour and hue, orange and red, and purple and sienna, and yellow and green, studded with very many dark yew-trees, distinct from and enhancing the delicate, frail decay-colours. But even these had arrayed themselves with a very illumination of rose-berries. I never saw them in such fruit, tiny, innumerable, fairy-lamps stringing all the branches.

And below and beyond all this beauty, a sort of theatre shutting in green fields smooth and vivid as lawns; here and there dotted with the red white-faced Hereford cattle. The Wye winding wonderfully through these meadows, and under wooded hills, crowned by terraced, tree-crested cliffs, standing out of clasping woods. Stern and hard they looked, the bare and rugged cliffs, with the woman-wood clasping their knees—

“He added not, and from her turned: but Eve,
Not so repulsed, with tears that ceased not
Flowing.

And tresses all disordered, at his feet
Fall humble; and embracing them, besought
His peace, and thus proceeded in her plaint:
“Forsake me not thus, Adam! witness
Heaven

What love sincere and reverence in my heart
I bare thee, and unweeting have offended, . . .
Unhappily deceived! Thy suppliant
I beg, and clasp thy knees!”

Thus fancifully I parallel the lowly tree-grace, and the lofty cliff-sternness, and easily find human analogies in the pathos of nature.

But my trouble is the river, this winding Wye. Do I not remember it clear and full, and deep and grand, flowing past the woods, and brimming up to the meadows of fair Herefordshire; the silver Wye, the abundant Wye. And now what do I see? Deep muddy banks, and a shrunken stream flowing low down between them. Is this my darling river? How can I understand the change? I seem to have lost an old friend. I suppose the long drought of that year accounts for the meagre waters, now the tide is out, and leaves the river

* Vocal in its wooded walls.

and I must wait for full enjoyment until

‘The salt sea-water passes by,
And rushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.’

And lo! already it is setting back again; the seaweed is drifting fast inland: the channel is rapidly filling, the mud banks sinking lower; and I seem to have watched but a little time before if not my silver Wye, at least my full Wye, has taken away my one regret and disappoint-

VOL. XVI.—NO. XCIII.

ment. And far over the coloured woods, and rugged cliffs, the yellow sea has returned and covered the mud banks of the Firth, and the sun has hammered a broad plate of the water into wrinkled, dented, beaten brass.

In looking at a landscape like this, you first admire it, and are content for a long while to admire it, as a whole. Then you begin to pick out, and to appreciate, and to dwell upon and gloat over, the details. How delicious in colour, that long rugged, rampart of Banniger crag, quite bare, except just at the very summit, as though scathed by some wide lightning sheet. The grey limestone singularly beautiful, out of the thousand coloured hues. One part had been lately quarried, and the stone there was warm-tinted; time had not yet toned and hallowed it into that cathedral-grey. My eyes dwell for a long time upon this grand titanic wall, passing thence again to the river, full now, and, after its wonderful curves which make an island almost of part of the valley, disappearing behind a bold-outlined hill, tree-clad, rock-varied. Beyond, it appears, leaving Chepstow, the chapel of whose castle could well be seen, and the smoke of the town behind the hill. Here it joins the Severn, that has before shown its distant gleam behind the rocky rampart. Then stretches the wide Firth of this river opening into the Bristol Channel. And, furthest, spreads the sunlight, burnishing the sea.

But while I waited, I heard a bustling noise in the oak above my head, and lo, a squirrel, busy and blithe! These little creatures in their free state have a vast charm for me; I have not often been where they are abundant. And I can fancy the delight of the Londoner, accustomed to see them only in the Pantheon bird-room (alas, only a memory now!)—or in the Regent’s Park Gardens (soon, there is a mournful whisper, to become the same)—or on a vendor’s hand in the streets; I can fancy, I say, the delight of seeing the little creatures, free and happy and with no price on their heads, running with their

length of tail across the path, or up the tree-trunk; sitting on their branches, with the train become a standard, eating, or watching with bead-like eyes, while they clean their whiskered face; anon, affrighted or playful, dashing, rather, lightly flying, it seems,—from bough to bough, or from tree to tree, agile, bird-like, but yet giving us a change from birds:—for tree-animals are few with us. All this is a delight, even where it is not also a wonder; and for myself I love to keep a breathless quiet, and watch the movements and conduct of creatures that gradually then cease to be suspicious and become at their ease. Thus I have watched for a long while with much satisfaction, water-rat, shrew-mouse, ring-ouzel, squirrel. Presently, however, on this occasion, my friend disappeared into a retreat in a tree with a thick head of ivy; and so I went on with my landscape. Again he appeared, but almost directly re-entered his retirement. Here I acted in a way which will not bear relating, spoiling the harmony of the spirit of the woods; I bombarded the ivy castle with rotten sticks and pebbles,—not to harm, I need not say, but to scare him out. For a time he stood the siege; then, on a sudden, the sally-port was thrown open, there was a rush, and a bound, and a little long red flash, that leapt from tree to tree. A guilty feeling came over me to have disturbed his confidence.

A trifling incident, I grant. But somehow I fancy that it may have its passing interest not only for me, who remember it, but for others condemned to pass much of the fair year where there are no free squirrels, in the hard work of London offices, or London society. The poppy-petals are, in truth, fragile; yet you pluck the flower lightly without stopping, as you pass the crowded bank, and you find a moment's pleasure in the wrinkled scarlet, and glossy black, even if you throw it away and forget it the next. And if it gave a moment's pleasure let us imagine the gentle, humble-hearted, if gaily-attired thing, content; and conscious that it has not lived and died in vain.

Enough of apology: it is time, moreover, that I descend the hill, and get into the road to Chepstow, whose town, especially whose castle, is included in my bill of fare for the day.

And now I have a renewed enjoyment of the view. True, it lessens, and narrows; soon I lose the wide waters of the Firth and the Bristol Channel: and the great amphitheatre of the hills shuts in the view, with no suggested distance beyond. Still, I get my panorama cut up into pictures; and these framed by the trees under which I am walking, and through which I catch glimpses of the glories beyond. Just now, it was all background, now there is tree-foreground too. And under my feet, not a deep abyss ending in a billowy ocean of foliage, but firm forest-paths, gracefully littered with the wealth of the woodlands; bronze leaves lined with frosted silver; thin patinés of tarnished gold, eaten all over into holes; brown leaves, and leaves of faded crimson, and crisp rolls of dull buff or maroon. And I descend, and I descend, and still I pause with a new treat. Oh it is a great, an inestimable boon to be gifted with this capacity for appreciative enjoyment; to find gleanings everywhere, and harvests on special occasions! You may see, you have seen, tourists 'doing' a place like this; 'doing' Dovedale; 'doing' Tintern; 'doing' the Alps, or Niagara; all just as a matter of business, or as the necessary preliminary to the great delight of the day and the expedition, viz., the inevitable and heavy feeding to which it leads. The appetite which the change of scene and air, and the unwonted exercise, give; this, believe me, is often the true delight of your London tourist. A party of these sight-seers, (name-carvers;) we met in Dovedale; hollering and larking; my brother waxed indignant; would have turned them out, had he been autocratic; I reasoned with him, on the live-and-let-live principle. 'You have your refined, let them have their vulgar enjoyment; each is enjoying himself, though in a different mode.'

He grumbled in reply; but I am bound to say that I also was staggered when further up, and on our inquiring of a youthful tourist (one of Leech's) as to how much farther we could go, or as to whether we could get to Thor's Cavern, he directed us, but assured us feelingly, that we should not find a 'Pub' all the way. A 'Pub' in Dovedale! The very trout might have leapt from the stream in dismay.

However, I am not now in Dovedale, but on the lower road, at last, to Chepstow. Here I was flanked with rich wood on either hand, and could more closely wonder at the crimson-strung yews. I leant for a time by the road-side; a mass of autumn-stricken foliage yet under me. Never tired was I of contrasting that rich dark green of the studing yews with the lighter variety that embedded them; nor of looking from scarlet to orange, and thence to the frail wan green that had gone back to look (in vain) for the fresh and vivid spring tint, after a heavy summer sameness; thence to a glare of yellow; and so to a bewildering mosaic of colour and tint, until pulled up short and righted by the emphasis of one of my red-fruited black-green friends. There was here also a lovely lower view of the Wyndcliff scene. How grand the abrupt and inexorable walling in of the Wye-valley; the grey range of terraced limestone standing out of the colour, crowned with a grave green; the muffled sky (for it had clouded over) in beautiful harmony.

On, however, on; for there was much to be done. And so the stately Wyndcliff and its clasping woods were left behind, and I found me before long in a straight dull road, which ran on with little variety for a mile or two.

And this is Chepstow Castle. A grand ruin, with its round grey towers, and walls built on the perpendicular cliff that rises sheer and sudden from the bank of the Wye; the rampart, indeed, that checked the wanderings of the erratic river. A grand old ruin, grandly placed, fixed and stoic beside the swift-

gliding water; seeming to grow out of the solid rock, as old, and apparently as enduring as that. Naturally one looks at these proud but fallen relics of an ancient time with a certain degree of compassionate sentiment. They have outlived the days of their glory and their might; we might think of Keats's dethroned Titans as we contemplate their fallen grandeur and despised strength. How strong they were, how almost impregnable; and how few rounds of our modern artillery would shake their huge towers and heavy walls into a heap of shapeless ruins. Yet (however we feel inclined to insult them with our bemoaning) they ask not our compassion, they accept it not. Sternly and grimly they frown at the frivolities and lightnesses about them, never condescending to relax their severity. The sunlight at evening rests upon them and lights their summits and the rounded towers. But the warm light only brings out more distinctly the roughness and scars, the dents and ravage of sieges and many wearing years. Gaunt, scarred veterans, they know not how to smile. The graceful ivy crowns their turrets with victor's garlands; they do but suffer apathetically that she work her will: she carefully hides the deep dents and the ruined breaches, and kindly and tenderly clothes the weatherbeaten sides; but that ungracious abstraction still remains as before. Spring comes, feeling kindly to all, and adorns the grey ruins with a thousand touches of loveliness and grace; but her blackthorn spray, or her unrolling ferns, or the delicate and tender green that lovelily decks the mountain ash, or the beech, or fragile birch, that somehow have found a hold half way up those grim battlements; these fancies and conceits find no response at all. Then glowing Summer tries her hand, but the warrior Ruin yields no whit to her blandishments, and stares impassible and unsoftened out of the wild rose-mass that scars the battlements, or the honeysuckle-wreaths, and white bindweed, and red sweetbriar clusters, or the bristling deep-blue bugloss, or the tall

scarlet snapdragon with its brimstone mouths, or the pink valerian that leans over from giddy heights above depths where the prisoners used to moan; or the sweet-breathed wallflower that clings to the sheer perpendicular walls. Bees murmur in the flowering ivy; butterflies 'show and shut' their 'splendid wings' upon the grey warm old stone; busy jackdaws chatter about the loopholes, doves woo and coo in the full-foliated trees about the moat that brim up even with the grass-fringed walls; thrushes sing out clear and glad from the highest bough of the beech; a hum of busy men, or a laugh of gay idlers rises from the upstart modern houses built (not like these old buildings), only to let and not to last. But Summer with her gay life is only by contrast in harmony with this relic of the deathful past; she prevails nothing to move its cynic stolidity. Nor is Autumn much more successful, with her decking of scarlet rowanberries, or her burning hips and haws; even her sympathetic death is too frail and weak to have much in common with this unyielding, everlasting decay. Winter suits better, when the snow has hidden all vegetable life, and the whole earth lies in a calm desolate serenity; and the birds are silent or dead; and a winding sheet east, like a scarf, even over the evergreen naked-stemmed pines. Great folds of snow hide the ivy on the ramparts, and smother the withered grass on the towers; and like silver moss it clings to every ruggedness and broken surface of the grey stone; and little ledges have their high-piled rim, and every loophole has its white threshold; and the Ruin in its shroud looks now less ungentle than at any other time.

But how I am rambling on! What fantasies are these? I was lost in a reverie as I stood before this grim dead Building; nor was the thrill of respectful sympathy unnatural nor unshared by others. What more grand than such a Ruin can Milton find for comparison with his fallen Archangel, whose face

'Deep scars of thunder had intrech'd, and care
Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
Of dauntless courage.'

Thus he describes him, essaying, you remember, to address his army:—

'He above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower; his form had not yet lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than Archangel ruined.'

Oh, yes! there is much to think of, standing before a ruin like this. We fancy the ranks of stalwart yeomen, the archers in Lincoln green, the gallant knights; we see Rebecca watching from her loophole, eager Ivanhoe, half risen, leaning on his arm; we hear the Black Knight thundering at the postern; there are the massive rocks ready to be hurled on the besiegers' heads; here the bright molten lead pours down, part clinging to the walls; here there are the clutching fingers still extended, as the ladder is forced backward into the moat. A rude cannon bursts, killing the men that were working it; there is a trumpet-call; and, ah! the foe have mounted the ramparts at another point; the garrison throng to oppose them; they close hand to hand upon the wall; here an attacker and there a defender topples headlong over the rampart, clef to the brain, thrust to the heart; the combat deepens, the victory wavers; the attacking party begin to give ground. Just then, see, at some other point neglected in the struggle a fresh party of assailants have won the heights; they fall on the garrison in the rear; the case is desperate now, the castle is taken; it is but to sell life dearly; one by one they fiercely die, but ere the last falls, lo! the castle gates have been opened, and the enemy swarms in.

Well, I had better go in too; the castle gate is opened, partly because I rang the bell. I am not ill-pleased that there should be no kindly preparations for greeting my entry with a ladle of boiling lead; such a ceremony might please the antiquary, but I love not such horrid rain.

A grand ruin! Yes, a grand ruin. Exceedingly interesting, but not, I think, *fascinating*, like Haddon Hall or Tintern Abbey. Here you seem to want a companion; at the Abbey you would rather be alone.

Not such a companion, however, do you desire, as this, that shows you over for base lucre. Glad are we when she has shown us the fine storeroom, which we are interested to hear was supplied from the river;—indeed, we find ourselves nearly set musing again;—when, besides, she has pointed out the buttery hatch, and, giving us a general idea of the plan of the castle, has left us free to meditate in the tower where Jeremy Taylor, Divine and Poet, and Henry Martin, Regicide, were confined. Three stories of prisons. Let me climb first to the midmost, and contemplate the ledges on which once rested the floor paced for twenty weary years by the feet of the unhappy man whose hand was stained with the blood of his weak and culpable, yet surely good and noble monarch. Can I pity him? Could I pity the Right Honourable John Bright, or Edmond Beales, the democrats of our day, if—but this is hardly likely! I fear in such a case pity and sympathy would be difficult: but I am removed from the contentions of those old troubled times, and I cannot help feeling a prick of compassion and sorrow for that lonely fanatic. Twenty long years! Even fanaticism would (one might dream) cool down in such a time; and maybe he repented of his deed before he died. Yet his epitaph in a Church near by seems to forbid such a hope, and to take the lofty martyr-strain. Well, well, still I cannot help sorrow for him. Twenty long years! and only this span for his walking, and just those slits in the wall for his seeing. I dare say he at last wearied of even this view. And never a soul to speak to but his gaoler; no kindly word, no kindly look, no sympathizing pressure of a hand—for twenty years! So to live; the dial of his life stopping, as it were, while other hands moved on; and so twenty years of the world's history worked itself out, while, still

living, he was shut away from its events and strifes; the ever-moving caravan had left him twenty years behind. And then when old age crept over him; when death was now overshadowing him; no face to look at, sorrowful because of him; no hand to grasp when the great loneliness seemed most present to his soul; none to mourn for him, none to regret him; the old friends had died long ago, and for twenty years he had been debarred from the chance of making new. Or did the stern old Puritan care for none of these things? Had the maggot of self-righteousness eaten out all the kernel of his heart, and left nothing there but dust and dryness? Who can tell? Only this we know, that a creature, once a blithe and laughing child, with the world for his playground; once a lithe youth, with a still wider domain of dreamland;—was shut up for the last third of his life in this narrow, round room. And, so thinking, we descend.

What a contrast is found in the tenant of the next story! I ascend, and now I am looking at the walls which hemmed in our poet-divine, the sweet and saintly Jeremy Taylor. Indeed, his writings are the very poetry of Theology: his well-known 'Living and Dying'; his less known, but exquisite 'Life of Christ.' Around such a theme you may guess how his appreciative and creative thought burst into luxuriant bloom; for even a bare rod would put out bud and blossom and almonds in the shrine of his heart. And I see his sweet, grave face, and his broad, calm brow, as he stands half musing, half watching the molten crimson of the sunset from this loophole: saintly thought and natural beauty being spun in a twisted thread through his meditations. Not long stayed he here: now, however, the abundant pink valerian and fragrant wallflower have marked the place where his footsteps perhaps trod. He goes forth to his Master's work in the world again; this has been, to him, a retreat, rather than an imprisonment: a hermitage, rather than a dungeon.

But, oh! this pit, this dungeon indeed, underneath; below, under the damp earth; no sign at all of any window for light. Can we imagine it possible that any poor wretches can have been thrust down here? Oh, what horrors may have been enacted and endured in this dark and dismal hole! The growing terror of the everlasting darkness, especially if the heart were ill at ease; the horrible familiarity of toads and worse reptiles; the dread of sleep because of the swarming rats. Ah, me! to think that men should be so cruel to men! To go to your comfortable bed happy because you had thrust some enemy into such a place; to pull the sheets to you, gloating over his agony. Well, I can't enter into the feeling at all. I must have had the poor fellow out and enjoyed the luxury of seeing his surprise at the hot supper and comfortable bed which should have been provided for him; and I should thus go to bed a happier man, and never regret my weakness, even though he should have cut my throat by the morning.

It is time that I went on, or good Mrs. Geaves will have to wait over-long with potato and roast fowl anxious to be dished up. I come to the hollow chapel, with remains of fine chancel arch and windows. I climb wherever I can, startled by finding myself sometimes coming suddenly upon the edge of a parapet with a smashing descent beneath. Along the wall by the chapel many ferns and the dear little toad-flax have wrought modern and natural carvings, unsurpassed by any of the old. I come round another way, and now, on my return more particularly notice that which was pointed out as the fireplace of the soldiers' room. The wall has gone; the roof has gone; but here still remains this old centre of attraction to the former rough occupants of this room. Here buff coat and jock, here helm and shield, here spear and bill, were cast together; and the rude, coarse jest, and the volleying laugh, and the words rising higher and higher, were heard.

Here the brown ale flowed round; here the half-trees were laid, and, smitten, sent a sheet of fireworks up the chimney;—but how silent, how desolate, is all now! ‘*There's nothing colder than a desolate hearth,*’ says one; and there is truth in the saying, both literal and figurative. ‘Where be your gibes now? your songs? your flashes of merriment? Extinct; and the world has rolled on, and altered all the fashions and all the warfare of that day; and the broken and blank fireplace and the rugged old castle yet remain into these later years.

One more look at the castle from the bridge over the Wye; and then, briak, on the homeward route again. *Homeward*: it was but the home of five days, that cottage under Tintern; but we call them homes, our resting-places, shifting tents though they are, until the Mansions come.

Quickly home: the dull road passed, and then, in the setting sunlight, a new enjoyment. For in going back you have variety in the same view, and, besides, you remember that I came by the upper road as far as the Wyndcliff; and so now there was an unexplored region, an unexperienced loveliness, awaiting me on my way. So I got a view of the Wyndcliff itself from below. Sublime in front of me it rose: majestic, clad up to the summit one way with most vivid colour and darkest yew, but sheer and precipitous on one side. And I entered my wooded road again, glad to leave the bare part behind; and I paused long to take in a tall wych elm, gold-yellow against the stern rock of Wyndcliff, springing from the roadside: ethereal, rarely lovely. Also a very golden bushy lime. The very next day, when I passed, I was pained almost to see how thinned my wych elm had become in the night; there was a wind, and the leaves snowing down thickly as I passed.

Once more I leant on the low wall; once more I looked down on beech, birch, oak, wych elm, varying in colour, and pale-yellow ash, and rich yews, stretching down beneath; spread out; wonderful in

tint and hue. And yet below there were those soft pasture lands, parted by the winding Wye.

So I passed on, drinking in beauty. Strange roots of beech twisted within the stones; yews clinging hardly to the very edge of cliffs; fluffy hemp—agrimony in seed; in the low wall delicious tufts of maiden-hair and small ruefern. Carefully did I collect roots of these next day, walking to the railway station—lamentably did I leave them in an omnibus, and stood, in despair, in Oxford Street, suddenly aware of my loss, but too far behind to redeem it.

But I passed on. The hills behind Tintern rose clothed with close brushwood, a contrast to the Banniger crags. I had seen these last to singular advantage. The setting sun lit the limestone terrace, and just touched the further rocks.

The warm glow on the cold grey was a thing rather to be inhaled than spoken of. But now the close and coloured brushwood clothed the hills, and (prosaic as is the simile) almost suggested a Brussels carpet of richest texture. Out of it stood, here and there, sheer bare or ivy-sprinkled cliffs, abrupt and sudden. But in contrast to this colour, wonderfully various and bright, of the copse-clothed vast hill-side, there was one wide sheet *all* a dull green. Just newly-springing ash, &c., from last year's cutting, and thus keeping its greenness longer. I found a pleasure in looking from this to the coloured hills: accustoming the eye; then suddenly looking back.

When I had got back to my snug little cottage under Tintern I much enjoyed my quiet evening: also my chicken and potatoes.

THE PICCADILLY PAPERS.

By a PERIPATETIC.

CRABB ROBINSON'S "DIARY."^{*}

IF the late Mr. Crabb Robinson had contemplated these three goodly volumes, his breast would have heaved with gentle emotion, and he would have felt that he had not lived in vain. He always used to say of himself that in his long career he had done nothing. The point of the remark was that it contained an immense deal of truth. His long, leisurely life of ninety years has left little records beyond these jottings of diary and reminiscence. There are many persons now living who could write even a much better diary, only they are hardly likely to do so. Very few men care to preserve diaries for publication. Mr. Robinson had not a productive mind, but he had one of rare receptivity, with a precious vein of genuine Boswellism in it, and he was a master in the art, now nearly lost, of conversation. He was a man of limited means, and he moved

within a limited range of society, but within these limits he achieved a high social reputation. He was a man of great moderation and good sense. He went to the bar late in life because he had not enough money, and quitted it comparatively early, when he thought he had as much as he wanted. Still, he modestly admits, that though a barrister he was no lawyer. Though he made an opening on the 'Times' and the 'Quarterly Review' he did nothing in literature. Accident and good fortune and his own merit drew him while in active life into contact, and, in some cases, into close intimacy with many distinguished persons. Later in life he joined the Atheneum Club, assign-

* 'Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson, Barrister-at-Law, F.S.A.' Selected and Edited by Thomas Sadler, Ph.D. In three vols. Macmillan.

ing at the time no importance to the step, and he found that it immensely increased the circle of his acquaintance. A bachelor of simple tastes and of a generous disposition, he was able to do many kind things, and when money came to him at last largely by inheritance he was able to do munificent things. He was always a Liberal of the Liberals both in politics and theology, and with the *bonhomie* of his party he clung close to his friends, and his friends clung closely to him. Every one knew something more or less about Crabb Robinson, and his 'Diary' has been received with the greatest avidity. In his ninety years he seems hardly ever to have made an omission of any remarkable incident, personage, or good saying that came to his knowledge. If such a rule were generally followed biography would be wealthy indeed; we almost shudder to think how wealthy. Dr. Sadler has gone very carefully and judiciously over the vast mass of papers that came into his hands, and forms a perfect repertory and magazine of good things. Mr. Robinson is a most amusing old Herodotus, and has, like that father of history, an infinite collection of stories. We shall not give much attention to his life beyond indicating its leading landmarks, and shall make a *florilegium* from its records.

He came of a humble stock, but claimed some affinity with the poet Crabbe. He entered an attorney's office and became clerk to Cowper's friend, Hill. Coming into a little property of a hundred a-year, he determined to improve his mind and to travel. He spent some years in Germany, and made himself thoroughly master of the German language at a time when this was an intellectual distinction. Here he made also, though after a somewhat distant and stately fashion, his acquaintance with Göthe. His first English literary acquaintance of note was Mrs. Barbauld, who wrote those lines which Wordsworth wished were his, and which some people have repeated every night of their lives:—

'Life, we've been long together,
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather:
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear:
Then steal away, give little warning,
Choose thine own time;
Say not good night, but in some brighter clime
Bid me good morning.'

He got a brief engagement as foreign correspondent to the 'Times' at Altona, and afterwards in Portugal, and for a short time he was their foreign editor. He became acquainted with Charles Lamb, who brought him into connection with Coleridge, Hazlitt, Wordsworth, and all that set. In fact, he comes in contact with an immense number of eminent people, and has always something noteworthy to say about them; but in a very large number of cases—of course there are many exceptions—he merely comes in contact with them and there is no lasting intimacy. With the Lake poets there was a sincere and prolonged friendship, though neither in poetry nor in religion had he much real community of feeling with them. Most years, also, he went abroad, but his descriptions of travel, which did not extend beyond the beaten track, are not so good as his personal sketches of the foreigners whom he met. We have a description of O'Connell in his Irish home highly favourable to the Liberator, of whom Robinson was an undisguised admirer. In Italy he became acquainted with 'Walter Savage Landor—half an eagle, half a gander,' and his portraiture may be compared with Mr. Forster's elaborate work, being not quite so favourable. After his retirement from the bar he devoted himself with increased earnestness to society. He was fond of companionship, and he was himself most companionable, but he had little serious aim in life, and on the most important subjects his mind was always halting in a fog. His own views, concerning which he manifested some ambiguity, appear to have been distinctly Unitarian; latterly, he regularly attended one of their chapels. He was, however, fond of Anglican clergy of 'Liberal' views, what he calls 'clerical free-thinkers,' and their 'liberalism' in conversation

appears to have considerably transcended what they manifested in print. He knew Robertson, of Brighton, very well, and his great friend, Lady Byron, the widow of the poet. Fully allowing the many noble and excellent qualities that Lady Byron possessed, from all we hear respecting this lady we shall think she possessed an eccentricity, self-will, and unwomanliness (not using the word in any extreme or unfavourable sense) which rendered her as bad a wife for the poet as the poet was a bad husband to her. We have here one very remarkable letter which Lady Byron writes respecting her husband, in which she seems to break that remarkable silence which she otherwise uniformly preserved. The following extract contains more original matter than all the Countess Guiccioli's two elaborate volumes. 'Not merely from casual expressions but from the whole tenor of Lord Byron's feelings, I could not but conclude he was a believer in the inspiration of the Bible, and had the gloomiest Calvinistic tenets. To that unhappy view of the relation of the creature to the Creator I have always ascribed the misery of his life. It was impossible for me to doubt that, could he have been at once assured of pardon, his living faith in a moral duty and love of virtue ("I love the virtues which I cannot claim") would have conquered every temptation. Judge, then, how I must hate the creed which made him see God as an avenger and not as a father. My own impressions were just the reverse, but could have little weight; and it was in vain to seek to turn his thoughts for long from that *idée fixe* with which he connected his physical peculiarity as a stamp. Instead of being made happier by any apparent good, he felt convinced that every blessing would be "turned into a curse" to him. Who, possessed by such ideas, could lead a life of love and service to God or man? I may be pardoned for referring to his frequent expressions of the sentiment that I was only sent to show him the happiness he was forbidden to enjoy. You will now better understand why "The

Deformed Transformed" is too painful to me for discussion.' Mr. Robinson has also a very interesting anecdote of Wordsworth coming to him one day at Charles Lamb's, a number of the 'Edinburgh Review' in his hand, and being exceedingly angry at the unfair attack on a young lord's poem, and prophesying that the young poet would do something. 'Ah! if Byron had known that,' said Lady Byron, 'he would never have attacked Wordsworth.'

There is something melancholy in reading of the last days of this life, prolonged to the ninety-second year. The 'Diary' goes down to the year 1867, discussing an immense variety of matters, which are only as of yesterday in point of date, but which are here presented to us in an historical point of view and from a dead man's record, as if a whole chasm of time were interposed—talk about our judges, such as Sir F. Pollock, Byles, Channell; talk of Miss Coutts's breakfast parties and the men whom he met at the Atheneum, such as Dean Stanley, the Bishop of Oxford, Mr. Grote, and others; about poor Robson at the Olympic; very much talk about London University, to which he left a good deal of money. On every side his friends were dropping away from him through death; and though he made new ones, they were hardly equal in intellectual calibre to those of his youth. He could not go about in the streets without an attendant for fear of accident or of garotters. Some of his last entries indicate mortification and dispiritedness; he was haunted by the ill-founded suspicion that he was 'no longer a desirable companion.' His concluding entry of these many manuscript volumes is, 'But I feel incapable to go on,' and before another week he passed away.

Here are about a score of passages, which we quote from a larger selection, as well worth transplanting.

First interview with Goethe.—'Goethe lived in a large and handsome house, that is, for Weimar. Before the door of his study was marked in mosaic SALVE. On our

entrance he rose, and with rather a cool and distant air beckoned us to take seats. As he fixed his burning eye on the friend, who took the lead, I had his profile before me, and this was the case during the whole of our twenty minutes' stay. He was then about fifty-two years of age and was beginning to be corpulent. He was, I think, one of the most oppressively handsome men I ever saw. My feeling of awe was heightened. . . . Goethe sat in precisely the same attitude, and I had precisely the same view of his side face. The conversation was quite insignificant. My companions talked about themselves—one about his youth of adversity and strange adventures. Goethe smiled with, as I thought, the benignity of condescension. When we were dismissed, and I was in the open air, I felt as if a weight were removed from my breast. Goethe has often been reproached for his *hautour*. I believe, however, that this demeanour was necessary for self-defence. It was his only protection against the intrusion which otherwise would have robbed him and the world of a large portion of his life.

Horne Tooke.—Anthony Robinson related an anecdote of Horne Tooke showing the good-humour and composure of which he was capable. Holcroft was with him at a third person's table. They had a violent quarrel. At length Holcroft said, as he rose to leave the room, "Mr. Tooke, I tell you you are a —— scoundrel, and I always thought you so." Tooke detained him and said, "Mr. Holcroft, some time ago you asked me to come and dine with you; do tell me what day it shall be." Holcroft stayed.

Anecdote of a dancing master.—Fraser related a humorous story of his meeting in a stage coach with a little fellow who was not only very smart and buckish in his dress but also a pretender to science and philosophy. He spoke of having been at Paris, and of having read Helvetius, Voltaire, &c., and was very fluent in his declamation on the origin of ideas, self-love, and the other favourite doctrines of the new school. He said, "I have no objec-

tion to confess myself a materialist." On this an old man, who had listened for a long time to the discourse, and had more than once betrayed symptoms of dissatisfaction, could not contain himself any more, "D——n, that's too bad! You have the impudence to say you are a *materialist* when I know you are a dancing master."

Anecdote of the late Lord Cranworth.—My immediate senior on the circuit was Henry Cooper. He was very far my superior in talent for business, indeed in some respects he was an extraordinary man. His memory, his cleverness were striking; but so was his want of judgment, and it often happened that his clever and amusing hits told as much against as for his client. One day he was entertaining the whole court when Rolfe (afterwards Lord Chancellor) whispered to me, "How clever that is. How I thank God I am not so clever."

Hume on Shakespeare.—On my noticing Hume's obvious preference of the French tragedians, Coleridge exclaimed, "Hume comprehended as much of Shakespeare as an apothecary's phial would, placed under the Falls of Ningara."

Waterloo.—A more uninteresting country or one more fit for "a glorious history," being flat and almost without trees, than that round Waterloo cannot be imagined. I saw it some years afterwards, when ugly monuments were erected there; and I can bear witness to the fact of the great resemblance which the aspect of the neighbourhood of Waterloo bears to a village a mile from Cambridge on the Bury road.

The saying of a busy man.—He who calls on me does me an honour; he who does not call on me does me a favour.

Wordsworth in his own neighbourhood.—I may here mention a singular illustration of the maxim, "A prophet is not without honour save in his own country." Mr. Hutton, a very gentlemanly and seemingly intelligent man, asked me, "Is it true, as I have heard reported, that Mr. Wordsworth ever wrote verses?"

Your obedient servant.—Hammond went to France, having de-

clined an offer by Serjeant Rough, who would have taken him as his private secretary to Demerara. He assigned as a reason that he should be forced to live in the daily practice of insincerity by subscribing himself the humble servant of those towards whom he felt no humility.'

Duke of Wellington.—'The Duke of Wellington was there, and I saw him looking at a portrait of the Duke of Marlborough. A lady was by his side. She pointed to the picture and he smiled. The Duke of Wellington's face is not flexible or subtle, but is martial, that is, sturdy and firm.'

Rome.—' "Sir," said a king's messenger to me one day, "don't believe what travellers tell about Rome: it is all a humbug. Rome is more like Wapping than any place I know." "That man is no fool," said Flaxman, who laughed on my repeating this. "Of course he could not understand, perhaps he did not see, the antiquities; but some of the finest are in places that resemble Wapping in general appearance."

Sir Thomas Lawrence.—' Jacob being restless, Mrs. Paterson said, "I fear, Mr. Lawrence, Jacob is the worst sitter you ever had." "Oh, no, ma'am, I have had a worse." "Ay, you mean the king," said the lady. (Lawrence had been speaking of George III. as a bad sitter.) "Oh, no!" said Lawrence; "it was a Newfoundland dog!" The lady was not a little affronted.'

Lord Jeffrey.—' At seven I dined with Rolfe. An interesting party—in all twelve. Among them was Jeffrey, once editor of the "Edinburgh Review." Jeffrey is a sharp and clever-looking man; and, in spite of my dislike to his name, he did not on the whole displease me. His treatment of Wordsworth would not allow me to like him, had he been greater by far than he was. And therefore when he said, "I was always an admirer of Wordsworth," I could not repress the unseemly remark, "You had a singular way of showing your admiration."

Clarkson.—' I asked Clarkson whether he thought of the fate of

his soul hereafter. He said he had no time; he thought only of the slaves in Barbadoes.'

Anecdote.—' I have heard of a lady, by birth, being reduced to cry, "Muffins to sell" for a subsistence. She used to go out a-nights with her face hid up in her cloak; and then she would in the faintest voice utter her cry. Somebody passing heard her cry, "Muffins to sell!—muffins to sell! Oh! I hope nobody hears me."

Southey.—' I walked out with Wordsworth. We met with Dr. Arnold. We talked of Southey. Wordsworth spoke of him with great feeling and affection. He said, "It is painful to see how completely dead Southey is become to all but books. He is amiable and obliging; but when he gets away from his books he seems restless, and as if out of his element. I therefore hardly see him for years together." Now all this I had myself observed. Rogers also had noticed it. With Wordsworth it was a subject of sorrow, not of reprobation. Dr. Arnold said afterwards, "What was said of Mr. Southey alarmed me. I could not help saying to myself, 'Am I in danger of becoming like him? Shall I ever lose my interest in things and retain an interest in books only?'" "If," said Wordsworth, "I must lose my interest in one of them, I would rather give up books than men."

Wordsworth.—' Mr. Wordsworth ought to have been at Buckingham Palace at the Queen's Ball, to which he received a formal invitation. "The Lord Chamberlain presents his compliments. He is commanded by Her Majesty to invite Mr. William Wordsworth to a ball at Buckingham Palace, on Monday, the 24th July—ten o'clock. Full dress." To which he pleaded as an apology for non-attendance the non-arrival of the invitation (query command?) in time. He dated his answer from this place: "The Island, Windermere;" and that would explain the impossibility. But a man in his seventy-fourth year would, I suppose, be excused by royalty for not travel-

ling three hundred miles to attend a dance, even if a longer notice had been given. [He subsequently went to such a party, and enjoyed it much.]

A mot of one Sylvester.—‘When people tire of business in town they go to retire in the country.’

Mr. A. H. Layard as a boy.—‘Tuesday I had at breakfast Nineveh Layard, whom the others came to meet. You will remember your son’s having spoken of this high-spirited lad whom he once dined with and used to meet in my chambers. His uncle accused me of misleading him. I believe I did set his mind in motion, and excited in him tastes and a curiosity which now will not be matter of reproach, seeing that the issue has already been so remarkable. His adventures in Asia terminated in the discovery of the Nineveh antiquities, which have given him a place in the future history of art. But, more than that, he has had the means of developing such personal qualities that he has been put into a place which *may* lead to his one day occupying a prime position in our political institutions. He has been appointed Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs: he will now show what is in him. This is a start that of course delights his hopeful and alarms his timid friends.’

Harriet Martineau.—‘She can write a fair leader and plan something useful for her neighbours, while her voice is lost from debility.’

Kenyon and the Brownings.—‘John Kenyon has the face of a Benedictine monk and the joyous talk of a good fellow. From him Mr. and Mrs. Browning received legacies amounting to more than ten thousand pounds, and R. D. Porter between six and seven thousand.’

Samuel Rogers.—‘The acquaintance I have seen most of is Samuel Rogers. It is marvellous how well he bears his affliction. He knows that he will never be able to stand on his legs again; yet his cheerfulness and even vivacity have undergone no diminution. His wealth enables him to partake of many enjoyments which could not other-

wise be possessed. Yesterday I took a drive with him through Lord Chichester’s park. He has had a carriage made for him which deserves to be taken as a model for all in his condition. The back falls down and forms an inclined plane. The sofa-chair in which he sits is pushed in; the back is then closed, and a side door is opened to the seat in which his servant sits when no friend is with him.’

These are select items from volumes which are exceedingly rich in literary *ana*, and which will be very helpful to the future historian in constructing a literary history of the century.

MR. MILL ON THE SUBJECTION OF WOMEN.*

Mr. Mill still labours assiduously in the cause of ungrateful clients, most of whom repudiate his advocacy and give him no thanks for his exertions. We may say at once that he has entirely failed to convince us of the truth of the main thesis of his work. The matter may be put very simply. To give women political power would be to hand over political supremacy to women, since women are in a majority in this country. This procedure, as Aristotle so often remarks in his writings, ‘seems to be absurd.’ In these days, when all the chivalry of the Lower House does not permit the removal of the grating, it appears to be in the highest degree unlikely that our senators will ever make room for the ladies at their sides on the green benches. Still, Mr. Mill has brought together a very important body of reflections which deserve serious attention, and it is always a pleasure to read a new publication of his, written in a style as clear and transparent as the subject is weighty and the treatment full of thought.

There is no doubt but men, while legislating for women, have acted slowly and selfishly. The old English law has been barbarously harsh in the case of women. Only by Serjeant Talfourd’s Act, as it is

* ‘The Subjection of Women.’ By John Stuart Mill. London: Longmans.

called, were women allowed, despite the husband, to have access to their children, and by more recent legislation they have acquired some proprietary rights. Latterly a strong effort has been made to throw open the medical profession to them; and so long as their practice is confined to women and children the measure merits strenuous support rather than the strenuous resistance which it sometimes received in medical circles. In these days women publicly lecture, like Mrs. Clara Balfour and Dr. Mary Walker, or preach, like Miss Marsh or Mrs. Thistlethwaite. Literature and art are as much their domain as that of the unworthy sex. The rarity of instances in which these accessible paths of public life are sought out by women prove that the sex is hardly taking heartily to public life. Before long women will probably have the right of voting in municipal elections, and we see no reason why they should not vote in parliamentary elections. It is absurd enough that Miss Burdett Coutts should not enjoy a right that may be obtained by the lowliest of her dependants. We would rather have the judgment of such women as Miss Martineau or Mrs. Somerville on any public question than that of any five thousand householders taken at random. We might even take a lesson from the Turks, who are traditionally supposed to be hardest of all upon women, who yet allow the women to retain their name and their property, permit appeal against a husband's ill-usage, and in case of separation decree the restoration of the wife's property. Beyond amending defective and barbarous legislation, it is quite possible that direct avenues of distinction may be thrown open to women who have legitimate aspirations for a career of some greater freedom and independence.

But, in a way which is rather unusual for him, Mr. Mill does not deal with the question practically, and fails to combat the main reasoning that lies against his propositions. We go with him thoroughly in thinking that a *femme sole* should have the same voting power, pos-

sibly some of the offices, which her husband would have were she married. But he distinctly contemplates the case of husbands and wives having different and conflicting votes. We are old-fashioned enough to follow the theological *dictum* which tells us that a family should not be divided but have a head, and that this headship should reside in the husband. He fails to note how just in proportion as a woman makes an inroad on public life she abdicates her undoubted supremacy in domestic life. If women take one set of offices from men, why should they not take another set? If they wish to be politicians and rulers, why should they not also be soldiers and sailors, fire-women and police-women? In making these demands are they not practically abandoning their claim to chivalry, courtesy, and forbearance?

The evading of this direct difficulty is the ignoring of the substantial fact of the controversy—that distinction of sex which physically and morally must be followed by a variety of other distinctions. We may have manly women and womanly men, but for all that, to quote the 'Princess,' which is a real contribution to the solution of the question, each is 'distinct in individualities,'—'woman is not undeveloped man but diverse.' There is a woman's kingdom, and in the promotion of all the sanctified and lofty objects of life, in the culture of affection and character, in the silent effective influence she yields in every matter of action and opinion brought within her cognizance, women obtain an enormous compensation for those technical disabilities which are consequently often more apparent than real. The fact is, that Mr. Mill is seeking to impose for the sake of a minority an order of things which the majority of women would assuredly reject. They would ill exchange the state for the family and reasoning for love. The minority is made up partly of women who voluntarily or in the course of events are unmarried; partly of those whose families have gone out into the world and

now require a fresh field for their energies; and partly of women, in any state of life, who possess unusual ability and force of character. Surely such women might find the sphere they seek without a formal invasion of that sphere which the instinct and judgment of the whole world, since the world began, have assigned to the other sex. They may do so both on the active and practical side of life, and also on the still, speculative, and retired side of life. In the latter, literature and art, the whole domain of thought and imagination are open to them. On the former side much more might be done than has been done already. Mr. Mayor, of St. John's College, Cambridge, has recently promulgated an admirable scheme for the formation of an institution where single women might live together on a plan of ample self-support, and be a nucleus for many schemes of useful and charitable work. A writer in the 'Morning Star' has just called attention to the engrafting a home system on the hospital system, if we would lower the death-rate and promote the practical aims of medicine, and strongly urges the wisdom of employing well-paid lady nurses. The Ladies' Work Society also indicates an important outlet. In fact, we believe that no good, sensible, moderate-minded woman ever sought, and sought in vain, the enjoyment of an active and blessed life.

We have especially to thank Mr. Mill for the sustained high ethical tone with which he has discussed a confessedly perilous subject. Nobler utterances on the subject of marriage have very rarely been made than in this little book. In the present day subjects of philosophical discussion are fashionable, and young people can hardly do better than read these striking pages of Mr. Mill. They will find more matter really bearing upon human life than in all the poetry and novels of the season. 'What marriage may be in the case of two persons of cultivated faculties, identical in opinions and purposes, between whom there exists that best kind of equality, similarity of powers and

capacities with reciprocal superiority in them—so that each can enjoy the luxury of looking up to the other, and can have alternately the pleasure of leading and of being led in the path of development—I will not attempt to describe. To those who can conceive it there is no need; to those who cannot it would appear the dream of an enthusiast. But I maintain, with the profoundest conviction, that this, and this only, is the ideal of marriage.' It is well known that Mr. Mill ascribes a large part of the merit of his works to his late wife, but we are afraid that the experience of most men is less happy and would point to different conclusions. Lastly, we would recommend young ladies, before accepting an offer of marriage, to give a careful perusal to Mr. Mill's pages. They little know the state of subjection, misery, and tyranny into which they may be about to plunge. We are afraid, however, that all his philosophy will have but a slender effect upon the marriage rate. Mr. Mill personally is to be congratulated. It is true that most ladies will have nothing to say to his views, which are simply abhorrent to their feelings; but there is a devoted minority to whom he is the champion of a downtrodden sex. In how many gentle bosoms would his appearance at any time excite sensations of gratitude and delight, as a second Bayard, a happier Lancelot?

THEVENTNOR NATIONAL HOSPITAL.

The Isle of Wight is to the Peripatetic, as to the rest of the world, a favourite locality. We know of no district, so easily accessible, where the change is so thorough and so salutary. Despite Newport with the neighbouring Carisbrook Castle, Cowes with its yachts, Ryde with its piers, to our mind Ventnor is the true capital of the ancient Vectis. It is a great thing for the island that the Queen has fixed her marine residence there, and there is hardly a family in it which in some way or other has not benefited by the fact; and in a different way, it is also a great thing that

Mr. Tennyson has done for the island what a group of elder poets have done for the Lakes. We are sadly afraid that in our youthful days of Tennysonian ardour we made an irruption on Faringdon House and carried away some memorial flowers. The peculiarity of Ventnor is, that whether you turn eastward or westward you have some of the loveliest walks in the world. I never enjoyed a drive more than that to Bonchurch the other evening. The fountain and lake-like pond, the wayside fountain or well, the large cross surmounting the cliff, the raised cross in the churchyard of the old church on the grave of William Adams, the mountainous hills in the rear, and the wide and great sea in front, make up a picture that leaves the heart and imagination satisfied with its sweetnes. When you fall into the scenery of the Landalip, stretching onwards towards Shanklin, whose chine certainly surpasses all the other island chines, you alight on a kind of primeval wilderness of rock and meadows that might have been the border land of Eden. I met an old man there the other day who remembered that famous landalip half a century ago, and, unlike some old men, and many young ones, could give his experience intelligently and brightly. Then westward you come to that scenery of the Undercliff which is absolutely marvellous and unique. Whether you take the road or the footpath, the undercliff walk of six or seven miles between Ventnor and Blackgang is absolutely unsurpassed. The scenic advantages are great, but the climatic advantages are still greater perhaps than Hastings, Torquay, or Penzance.

Dr. Hassall, a name of high scientific mark, that years ago struck abject terror into the hearts of fraudulent tradesmen, has for some time back been residing with essential benefit at Ventnor. Despite what Mr. Bright may urge in favour of free trade in cheating, most people will think that Dr. Hassall has in his time done real services to the community. His most recent services have, however,

been perhaps his best. Himself a delicate-chested man, he has sympathy for those similarly circumstanced, and has started, and carried a good way onwards towards completion, a new national cottage consumptive hospital. Wednesday, the 28th of July, was the day fixed for laying the foundation of the second pair of cottages for the hospital. The Princess Louise was appointed by her royal mother to perform the office of foundress. We cannot say that the Princess exactly observed the punctuality for which Queen Victoria is always so gracefully notable. The authorities gave her luncheon as soon as she arrived, while we, poor, common thirsty clay, were obliged to stay till five o'clock before we could partake of that 'luncheon' which is popularly supposed to succeed breakfast at no very enormous interval. Still it was a pleasure to see the face of the Princess, so honest, and so full of intellectual power; and her great and manifest nervousness was rather interesting and becoming than otherwise. She was well supported by the Prince and Princess Christian. We saw with regret that the royal liveries are still in mourning, which surely now might be exchanged for the pristine colours. The Princess had greater courage than ourselves, for she went a long distance through the wet grass to plant a tree in a distant corner of the hospital lands. Then, after an inspection of the buildings, she went off amid hearty cheers from the loyal islanders.

Thus far the London reporters have given some account of the proceedings; but they have been silent about some of the best speechifying I have ever heard, which took place at the marquee after the luncheon. Viscount Eversley took the chair, who, as Shaw Lefevre, Speaker of the House of Commons, earned his own niche in our history. He took the chair in virtue of his position as Governor of the Isle of Wight. Once, he told us, there had been great advantages attached to the office, but they had now all disappeared. There was a salary, but it had been stopped; there had been

a yacht, but it had rotted, or gone to the bottom; and there had been a castle, but it was in ruins. If he was not disestablished he was certainly disendowed. Then Bishop Ryan, Sir Lawrence Peel, Sir John Simeon, Dr. Hassall, and others made speeches, not of the empty and wordy kind, but of that better kind of table oratory which is anything but table beer. This is the roundabout, or peripatetic way, of saying that they were exceedingly good. Of course the theme was this special institution. The institution is national, and not local. It gives the consumptive patient two special advantages which are not found in ordinary hospitals. In the first place, he has the advantage of the loveliest scenery and the most salutary climate in the world. In all surgical, and in many medical cases, these are altogether subordinate considerations. But in consumptive cases they are paramount considerations. Most physicians prescribe change of climate to their patients as a good remedy, some as the best and only remedy. In the next place the hospital puts the patients under the very best conditions for profiting by the climate. This could only adequately be done on the cottage system. Each patient has a separate sleeping chamber opening on the south. Behind he is sheltered by the cliffs, in front the sea lies before him. The bedrooms are exceedingly good, as good as those for which you pay first-class prices in first-class hotels. The stairs and corridors are amply spacious. There is one sitting-room in proportion to six bedrooms, which strikes one, however, as being rather stiff measurement. A second sitting-room, perhaps on a smaller scale, would be a great improvement. Those who may wish to add a cottage to the institution can establish it under their own name.

But I must deprecate that conflict which seems to exist between the theory of the hospital and the cottage hospital. It is not possible, and it is not desirable, that the plan of the larger buildings should altogether give way to that of the smaller. In large cities you must

have large buildings; to lay out the London hospitals on the cottage system would be to take a suburb for them alone. Only in large hospitals can you rely on the constant presence and supervision of the most eminent men in the profession. Their presence is so important, not only to the sufferers and the students, but to the public at large, who are benefited to an enormous extent by hospital practice, that it would not be right to risk such advantages. Again, there is no doubt but in a palatial hospital you concentrate means and appliances which it would be very difficult to do in a cottage. In country districts, however, if you multiply hospitals, you are bringing the means of healing within readier access—you are multiplying patients—you are enlarging the character and experience of provincial medical men. The leading characteristic of the cottage hospital might perhaps be engrafted, in a measure, on London hospitals, by multiplying separate rooms. St. Thomas's Hospital, now rising on the southern side of the Thames, fronting the Houses of Parliament, being built on the system of communicating blocks, appears to approximate so far to the cottage plan. In the case of the Ventnor buildings all the advantages of the cottage system apply, and the disadvantages do not apply. It is not immaterial, but in the highest degree material, that the consumptive patient should be removed from the dense air of towns to a pure climate and essential position. His case is simple, awfully simple, and presents few problems for the consideration of our great medical lights. The average medical man will serve as well as the greatest genius; and in the Isle of Wight you have probably a higher than the average medical standard. We trust that the institution will soon be completed according to its splendid design. There is something happily contagious in the good example; and we trust that in other parts of the coast the example will be followed, till the supply of such institutions is equal to the demand.

and necessity for them. We can nowhere send our patients with greater confidence than where we know dame Nature may employ her own restorative method.

THE SEVEN CURSES OF LONDON.*

Ever since Mr. Greenwood, riving Quintus Curtius, took his celebrated leap into the mud bath in his famous character of an Amateur Casual, he has been accumulating an experience of an unenviable but very remarkable kind. When he undertakes to tell us about the 'Seven Curses of London,' we know that he is a master of this description of knowledge. Any ill-conditioned individual who wants to find anything wrong or morbid about the work will be as disappointed as he ought to be. Mr. Greenwood has done his work with a keen, searching, unsparing analysis, but he has done it as a gentleman, a thinker, and a philanthropist. We could greatly wish that his work were studied carefully by our legislature, for we have never elsewhere seen such a body of facts so skilfully and carefully arranged; and the book might serve as a corrective to much hasty and ill-considered parliamentary discussion this session. We see, with pleasure, that incessant observation of criminality and baseness has not deprived Mr. Greenwood of sympathy with those human outcasts who victimize society, indeed, but are themselves the worst of their victims. We confess to entertaining the suspicion that it is not the worst kind of people after all who are always getting into prison, and we think that Mr. Greenwood's pages will go some way to strengthen this impression. They possess a decided value on all subjects of contemporary social interests.

Mr. Greenwood has a sad story to tell, but it is a story not altogether unrelieved by brighter gleams. His moderate statistics on such a subject as the peculiar vice of great

* 'The Seven Curses of London.' By James Greenwood, the 'Amateur Casual.' London: Stanley Rivers and Co.

cities disprove the exaggerated accounts so often confidently given. In the same way he disproves Lord Shaftesbury's strangely overdrawn statement about the thieves' meeting-houses. At the same time we are glad to see that he fully recognizes Lord Shaftesbury's eminent philanthropic services. Mr. Greenwood has also a good word for the City Mission. He tells a story of some city missionary being able to go fearlessly to the den of some human tiger which three policemen together were afraid to enter. He reports, to our great satisfaction, that drunkenness, which he justly considers the crowning curse of all, actually shows diminishing statistics. If his frightful accounts of adulteration in drink were circulated among the poor, they would be sufficient to scare many a drunkard. We only wish that Mr. Greenwood could have given utterance in parliament to his scathing denunciation of Mr. Bright's plea on behalf of adulteration as being a thing essential to competition in trade. Mr. Bright expresses his fear that the low thief of a tradesman, disestablished and disendowed from poisoning and pilfering, should be obliged to leave the country and settle among a more easy-going people. 'Undoubtedly the better for him and the better for us,' says Mr. Greenwood. 'I would make this difference, however. When his iniquity was discovered, he should not go altogether unrewarded for his past services. He should be assisted in his going abroad. He should not be called on to pay one penny for his outward passage, and, what is more, he should be supplied with substantial linecy-wolsey clothing, and his head should be cropped quite close, so that the scorching sun of Bermuda or Gibraltar might not upset his brain for future commercial speculation.'

Mr. Greenwood treats the subject of boy criminals humorously as well as gravely. The little urchins soon find out the hobbies of the prison governors. One governor ascribes all immorality to immoral publications, another to tobacco, and a third has the theory that

any boy's heart can be melted who will talk about his mother. With infinite skill they play upon such hobbies. His account of the infamous fabrication of begging-letter impostors opens up a new and surprising chapter in human villainy. We had marked various passages for discussion, but our space is full.

We advise our readers to go to the book itself. The most valuable feature of it is, that Mr. Greenwood is fertile in suggestions about meeting the evils he describes. It is a painful, but intensely interesting work, and we are not without the hope that it will be attended with some practical good.

AT ALBERT GATE

In and out of the Season.

(ILLUSTRATED.)

'TIS Albert Gate where I am musing, and as all around I scan
I own myself a lonely and unfashionable man.
The Ladies' Mile is vacant now, a long white dusty glare—
Policemen, ragged boys and girls—and thunder in the air.
It is the spot, it is the hour, but it is a mental fix
To remember how the Corner used to look at half-past six;
And most of all corroding care is mine as I remember,
That of all the days of all the year 'tis the First day of September.

And here I used to rein my steed, and here I took my chair,
And close by yonder clump of trees, the maid I loved was there;
I leaned upon the railings, and I trotted in the Row,
Amid beaux and cavaliers a cavalier and beau;
Arranged with men to dine at clubs, and get some opera stalls,
My presence in those vacant halls the steward now appals.
I'm the Last Man, the Ghost, Deserted, Shipwrecked I,
Stranded upon these arid sands beneath a glowering sky.

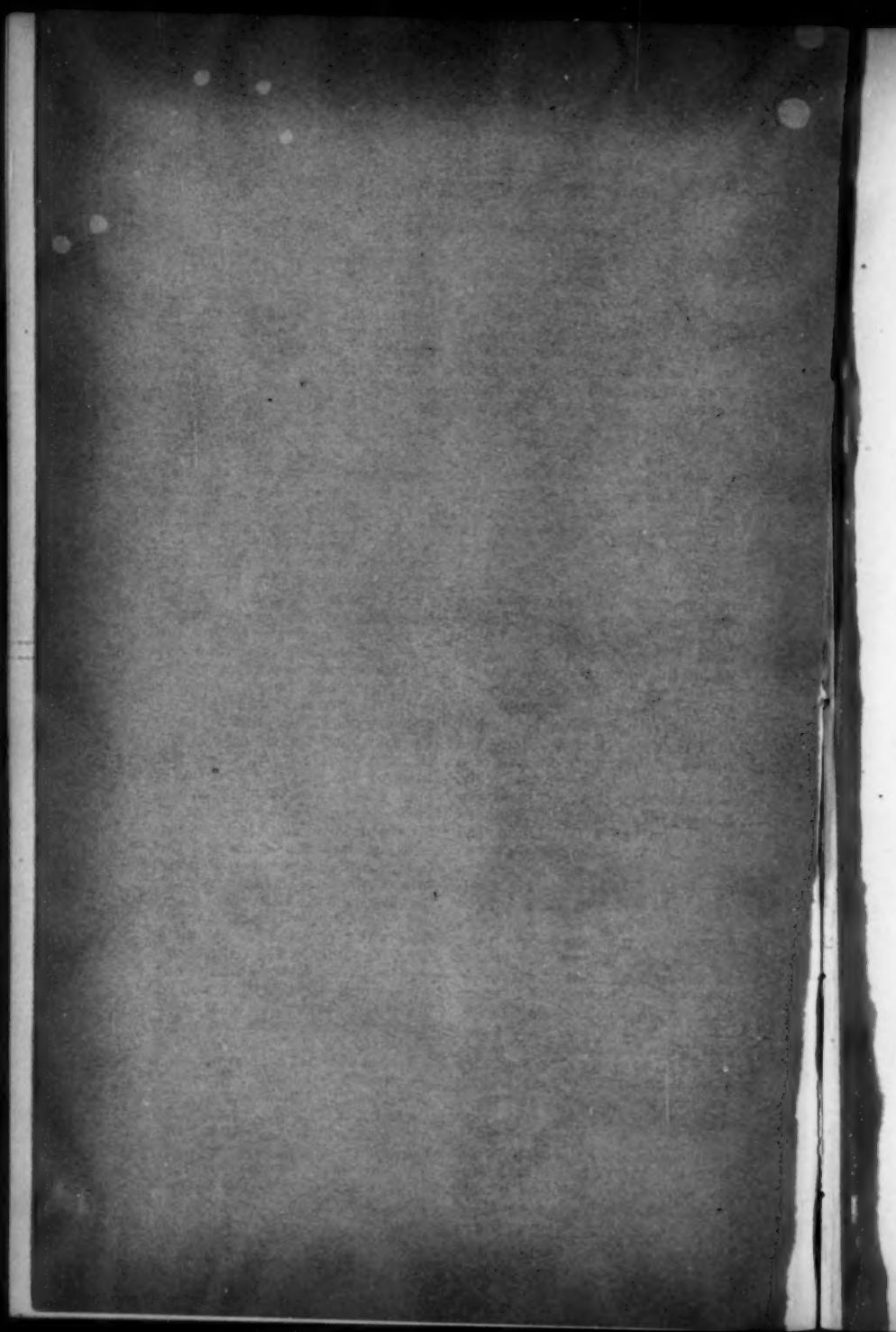
No longer can I chat and chaff with my pretty second cousin,
But though I cannot flirt with her, she'll be flirting with a dozen.
I've lost my chance of wooing, and it drives me into fits
To think that I'm in Pimlico and she's at Barritz.
I've blood and brains, but old Sir John has got the land and money,
And what avails the honeycomb if there isn't any honey?
They've gone abroad, the house shut up, and never any partridge
Need be afraid that on the First I'll use a bit of cartridge.

No invite comes, no leave is given, and so ensues the miracle
That instead of being on the moors, I'm only growing lyrical.
'Mid social desolation and pecuniary trouble
'Twould be better to be shouldering my gun across the stubble;
To lunch beneath the spreading beech, in lovely glades to wander,
Drink iced champagne, see charming girls, on locks and looks to ponder;
To recall the maze of chariots, smile, glance, greeting of the Row
Which was seen at Hyde Park Corner an eternity ago.

Other men are mountaineering, every man a climbing squirrel
On Norway or the Caucasus, the Alps or in the Tyrol;
And some intent on prairie sport or Mormon maids terrific,
Are trying the new line that runs across to the Pacific.
Like ghosts fair distant visions fleet—a sad but hungry sinner,
I pace grass-growing streets to get my solitary dinner;
Broad grim and grumbling on the past, and once more after dark
I'll make my flitterings like a ghost in the deserted Park.



Drawn by George Thomas]



SKETCHES IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

NO. II.—THE TREASURY BENCH—*continued.*

CERTAINLY Mr. Gladstone is the most triumphant minister whom the country has seen for many years. He has a larger majority even than Sir Robert Peel, in 1841; but then Peel's majority, until it was disorganised and upset, was more compact and manageable, as Conservative majorities generally are. Politicians would, we think, prefer a hard, close-voting, working majority of forty, to a nominal majority three times as large. In the present session there has been immense stress laid on personal loyalty to the leader, owing to the rebellion and disruption of previous sessions. A glance at the House shows us how thickly his followers muster. They overflow the Government side, they overflow the gangway, they overflow the Opposition benches. A remarkable incident this session proved the intense strength of his dictatorship. We do not mean Mr. Milbanke's irate expression, when he burned to avenge on Lord Salisbury the phrase of 'the arrogant will of a single man.' It is ordinarily Mr. Gladstone's custom quietly to slip into the House behind the Speaker's chair; but after the Lords had carried their amendments, it was resolved that a defiant ovation should be given to him. Mr. Gladstone was told that he must not enter the House in his usual way, but must go round to the front, and walk up the floor of the House. It was hardly worthy of Mr. Gladstone to fall into such petty tactics, and to use a small device. But he did as his party wanted him and had preconcerted, and as he advanced to his place he was greeted with a diapason of cheers which was lustily echoed again and again. The astonished Tories were prepared with no counter-demonstration, and the 'Times' came out with an edifying article next morning, warning the Lords to take to heart this impressive demonstration.

It certainly proved that Mr. Gladstone was for the time lord of the ascendant, only in the political world lords of the ascendant succeed each other almost with the rapidity of the long procession of Banquo's ghosts. The great business before the House this session has been the Irish Church business—now, to the immense relief and satisfaction of all parties, brought to a conclusion. Never has any legislation been more entirely the work of a single man. Lord Salisbury was to a certain degree right, inasmuch as any amendment which would have satisfied Mr. Gladstone would have satisfied the House. To him the cause in which he has been engaged is glorified. He has been fighting in a sacred crusade. In the opinion of many judges, the great speech in which he introduced the bill was the greatest which he ever delivered; only something of the same sort is generally said after any one of his great speeches. He has shown the strength of the elephant, who can both tear up trees by the root and pick up a pin. Not the smallest detail of this great measure was unfamiliar to Mr. Gladstone. He was the Atlas who sustained the entirety of the burden; still there were certain members of the Government who gave him conspicuous assistance. Such were the Attorney-General for Ireland, who vindicated for himself a great reputation. The Chief Secretary for Ireland, also, naturally, had a great deal of work to do, and he did it very fairly. We must say a few words respecting Mr. Chichester Fortescue.

He has obtained a great political, —a great social success. He is well known as the Chief Secretary for Ireland. He is perhaps better known as the husband of the Countess Waldegrave, that is, the lady who was once wife of Earl Waldegrave. This lady, the famous Miss Braham, or Abraham, has

been married four times, and is now one of the leaders of fashion. The present Earl Waldegrave, though not disestablished, is certainly disendowed. Mr. Fortescue belongs to an ancient Irish family, which within recent years has had revived in its favour the barony of Clermont, to which he is heir. He is one of the many statesmen whom Christ Church has given to the country. In his parliamentary life he has always filled the same seat which his father filled before him. Under the auspices of Lord Palmerston he was a Lord of the Treasury and an Under-Secretary; shortly after his marriage he was made a Right Honourable, and he is now, for the first time, a Cabinet Minister. Mr. Chichester Fortescue is unquestionably an able and vigorous man, endued with strong English sense. When at the Colonial Office he contrasted strongly and favourably with the thin official nature of Mr. Cardwell. His knowledge was broader and his views were sounder. He has also published a brace of essays, one of them, indeed, only a university essay, but showing a breadth of view, an independence of thought, and a power of industrious investigation which shows us that Mr. Fortescue would have succeeded still better if he had lived under conditions that would have forced him to work harder. But things altered when he had married the lady of Nuneham and Strawberry Hill. It is confidently said that the Chief Secretary for Ireland is to be a peer and Lord Lieutenant. Ordinarily the Chief Secretary shines with borrowed lunar light, as compared with the vice-regal sun. But the Countess Waldegrave is every whit a vice-queen, and so Mr. Chichester Fortescue will probably be soon Irish viceroy. The drawback to this elevation would be, that he would be pitchforked into the House of Lords—a circumstance of horror to many minds, as perhaps Lord Salisbury would testify.

When we look at the members of the Government out of the Cabinet, we are at once reminded of several who have just claims to be there. The

inequalities and imiquities of fortune are strongly marked. Earl de Grey and Lord Hartington, in a less remarkable degree Mr. Gœschén and Mr. Chichester Fortescue, are excluding from the Cabinet better men, in common estimation, than themselves. The absence of Mr. Milner Gibson and Mr. Horsman at the opening of Parliament—though the latter has now crept in for Lis-kard, and will doubtless soon diffuse the taste of nitric acid into the debates—might account for their not being in the Cabinet, although this objection was not allowed to stand in the way of the elevation of Mr. Bruce and Lord Hartington. There is a school of Radicals of an intellectual type which has hardly obtained the meed of recognition that might have been expected of Mr. Gladstone. Such men as Mr. Layard, Mr. W. E. Forster, and Mr. Stansfeld possess an interest for the public which they refuse to accord to the double earldom of a De Grey, or the prospective duchy of a Hartington. The school of intellectual Radicalism is especially strong on the subject of foreign affairs. Mr. Stansfeld somewhat injured himself at one time by his avowed sympathies with Mazzini; but it was a generous error, which the public has condoned, and which has not altogether been without its use in showing the intelligent and hearty sympathy which English statesmen can import into their consideration of foreign politics. It was found necessary to construct a place on purpose for Mr. Stansfeld. He was not aristocratic enough for the Cabinet, but he must not be sent down to the common ruck of under-secretaries and junior lords. So the place of Third Lord, taking precedence after the First Lord and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was constructed for him, with the glory and privilege of having an official private secretary to himself, while the junior lords must be their own private secretaries. The principal work of these persons, who are sometimes by no means juvenile, is to fetch and carry, to make a house, or not to make a house, as the case may be.

In the last administration some of the juniors neglected this duty, and got a very severe rating from Mr. Disraeli, in consequence of which one of them proffered his resignation, which was too absurd to be accepted. Mr. Stansfeld is really one of those who assist to form public opinion, and his views would on all sides be heard with respect; but when a man takes subordinate office, to a certain extent he forfeits his power of giving deliberate utterance to his convictions. It was originally much complained that he should have taken the sop of office, but now Mr. Bright has done so, our rising patriots all bid fair to be placemen. We do not altogether approve of Mr. Stansfeld's foreign politics, but we respect the sincerity and knowledge which belong to them.

Another man who has a wonderful speciality for foreign affairs is Mr. Grant Duff. It is hardly possible that any one should take a more masterly and comprehensive survey of the whole field of contemporary politics than he does. His publications on European affairs are most instructive, and show the industry and candour with which Mr. Duff has mastered a subject which is not over popular among our statesmen. Mr. Duff, however, is not effective as a speaker. He goes off in a shrill scream of a very unattractive kind. However, towards the close of the session he had the opportunity which he earnestly desired, and which had been long in its incubation, of delivering a set oration two hours long on the Indian Budget. It has been mentioned as a great oratorical triumph for him that he actually attracted more than forty members; indeed there were some seventy present. It is a more decided honour that he succeeded in getting the debate adjourned. But it is hardly fair towards the House of Commons to say that they care little for, and do not attend to, the interests of India. The real finance business of India is transacted in India itself. The House of Commons has only a nominal, and not a real and effective control over Indian taxation and

expenditure. They hear a prolonged statement, and do not take any action upon it. Moreover, the main interest of Mr. Grant Duff's speech had been already extracted by the previous speech on the same subject of the Duke of Argyll. Still Mr. Duff made a great effort—with only indifferent success—to achieve a great success. It was a somewhat confused attempt at being very clever. He apparently shuts his eyes, and bolts out his sentences without any stops. There was something too florid, epigrammatic, and would-be clever about it. It was a second-rate imitation of some first-rate performances of Mr. Lowe's. It was amusing to see how, in the middle of his speech, he suddenly bolted out of one style into another, from figures of rhetoric to figures of arithmetic. The peroration was particularly admired because it was the end of it.

Mr. Layard, again, is a great man on foreign subjects; but he has been taken away to the Board of Works. Mr. Layard has substantial claims to the title of being a really illustrious man. But he is imprudent, and even when he has a good case, as he probably had against 'Dr. Beke, of Bekesbourne'—that Beke, as he called him, with an arrogance very ungraceful from one eminent traveller to another. There is danger that Mr. Layard's moods may alienate from him the sympathies of his political friends and unfit him for practical politics. And yet what a noble fellow Mr. Layard confessedly is! Look over the folio volumes of his 'Nineveh Monuments,' and you will see that he has obtained a name to be remembered long after the lesser stars of politica are forgotten. Yet even in politics Mr. Layard has done very much. In the days of the Crimean war, when our army was more besieged than besieging, there was need for patriotic men to speak out boldly, and he did so with the authority of a man having the widest possible acquaintance with the 'Eastern Question.' At this time, too, Mr. Bright made his great denunciation of a 'wicked and incapable ministry,' which was the

most striking speech which he had hitherto made. He is one of the few men who have really put his mark upon the century. If we take Mr. Layard as a whole, his figure looms large over many of his contemporaries. Public men ought to be taken as a whole, but this is not the way in which the public ordinarily take them; but their reputation goes up and down in the political market, just as there are variations in the money market—a state of things which has done substantial injustice to Mr. Layard. It is remarkable that in the two most interesting biographies of the season—we of course mean Mr. Forster's 'Life of Landor' and the 'Crabb Robinson Diary'—there is mention made, exceedingly interesting and honourable, of Mr. Layard in his youth, and we are told of the great presages that from early days were formed of him. If Mr. Layard does not advance from his present point his political career will be a comparative failure; but he will have made his own niche in our history for all that.

Mr. Forster has an hereditary fame, for his father, for more than fifty years, was a prominent member of the Society of Friends, and died as an anti-slave missionary in Tennessee. He, too, has made a great reputation within the present decade—perhaps no statesman more so within the last six years. He sits for Bradford, having failed for Leeds. Mr. Forster is said to be unpopular to a degree among those with whom he is brought into business negotiations. This is the more unfortunate since, as Vice-President of the Committee of Council of Education, he succeeded a nobleman—Lord Robert Montagu—of whose kindness and courtesy all men said all good things. Lord Robert's appointment as Minister of Education was deservedly popular; even Mr. Lowe gave it nothing but warm praise. Yet Mr. Forster is a man of the very highest ability—only perhaps with too much consciousness of it—and there is a great administrative work which he may discharge in his high office. If he is surely it is a surliness of the honest

kind. He is, next to Bright, and before Mr. Milner Gibson became lazy and ineffective, the most conspicuous member of a school of politicians curiously identified with the north of England. Like Mr. Bright he is a Quaker; but while Mr. Bright's vehemence, bitterness, and unfairness make him contrast most strongly with the peaceable principles of the Friends, Mr. Forster has an honest intellect of his own. He is a true friend of the people, and his object is not to flatter but to serve them. Mr. Bright affects to love the people, and after a fashion he does so, but in great measure he uses them as dummies to effect his purposes, and sides against them to promote the special interests of his own order, the large moneyed employers of labour. Mr. Forster, in class one of the capitalists, is in sympathy one of the operatives. It has been truly said that while Mr. Bright's imagination is full of the social aristocracy he hates, Mr. Forster's is full of the working classes whom he loves. He has given to the trades unions a support and appreciation very rare indeed for one of his class to give. Mr. Bright would trample down with the sheer brute force of multitudes a minority of rank, thought, culture, and refinement, with the kind of savage joy with which a conqueror would contemplate a sacked and burning city; but Mr. Forster frankly told the working men that he thought the representation of minorities was right in principle. It was a general relief to all public men to find Mr. Forster so honourably and completely exonerated in the matter of the Bradford petition; and the deep appreciation of his services at Bradford, so much re-echoed in the wider sphere of English opinion, shows that Mr. Forster is becoming a power in the country.

Among the smaller men in the administration should be mentioned the Secretaries to the Treasury, Mr. Ayrton and Mr. Glyn. It was thought at one time almost impossible that Mr. Ayrton should take office. He ran a real risk of being considered a genuine parliamentary

bore; but subsequently it was discovered that though not pleasant or popular, it would be almost practically impossible to exclude Mr. Ayrton. He was so energetic and useful, always in his place, always speaking, always doing, that it was held certain years ago that he would have his place in the next Liberal administration. The place imposes much work and many duties, but Mr. Ayrton fully proves himself equal to them. Mr. G. O. Trevelyan is one of the most rising and promising of young statesmen. He learned his oratory in the school where his uncle, Lord Macaulay, learned it before him, but he did not learn it so well. Neither did he keep on such good terms with the authorities of Trinity as his uncle did before him, or become, like that uncle, a fellow of Trinity. His mother was the favourite sister of Lord Macaulay, and to her and her family came the fine inheritance of what Macaulay gained by ink and India. Mr. Trevelyan belongs to that *littérateur* class which we do not indeed desire to gain the same predominance which it possessed in France under the brief period of French parliamentary and constitutional government, but which we could wish to see more respected and more influential in the House of Commons than it is. This, too, we say, with the recollection that Mr. Gladstone has a verbose title to being a man of literature, and Mr. Disraeli is avowedly 'a gentleman of the press.' And yet Mr. Disraeli's party is that which has discouraged and overlooked the power of the press; and we are not surprised that at the present moment they should be in a minority in the country, when in the daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly press they are in a minority much more decided. Mr. Trevelyan's powers of writing will stand him in good stead when he comes forward more prominently as a speaker. He belongs to the old school of politicians who go through a regular apprenticeship for high office, achieving an academic reputation, serving long apprenticeships in minor offices, and so progressing

to the Cabinet. We have high hopes of Mr. Trevelyan, and though he will never rival the great literary reputation of his great relative, he will probably be more active and more famous as a politician.

Of all the officials of the Treasury Bench there is none that has a post so unique and important as the Patronage Secretary. He sits about the Treasury benches with careless and good-natured familiarity, and is condescendingly affable even to Cabinet Ministers. He takes his orders from no one but the Premier. With the Premier he has whispered conferences that often terminate in important practical results. It is interesting to contrast the Government Whip with the Opposition Whip. It is all the difference between up-hill and down-hill work. The one is flourishing like the green bay-tree, but the other is the good man struggling with adversity. The one is all buoyancy and cheerful promise; the other is administering heroic consolation to the forlorn hope. Bribery is not coarsely administered, as in the Walpole days of secret-service money, but, human nature being what it is, there are gratifications customarily given and expected. The Whip has to conciliate many a man's little tempers and to 'meet his views.' Above all, he has to inculcate the great moral lesson, that assiduous silent voting for Ministers must ultimately, sooner or later, lead to recognition and reward. A man is 'put out'; he does not get something that he thinks he ought to get, and he lets the Whip know that he cannot support the Government on their second reading, the subject being one on which he has always held independent convictions, or that he must insist upon a rigid inquiry into that shameful Borriaboola business. And then the question arises, What does the man want? Does he want a place in the colonies, or does he only want an invitation to a party? Will a *féte champêtre* do, or must we make his brother a judge or a commissioner? It is on the social field of the secretarial patronage work

that women exercise so much of their vast political influence—an influence which political ladies would not exchange for anything which Mr. Mill could offer them. Many an imposing-looking senator is a mere marionette played on by feminine wires. The social attractions of membership has for many minds an overweening attraction that is not without its danger. An M.P. is a considerable somebody in the world. If not an actual title, it is the very best next thing to it, and of the nature of a title; by various people held preferable to a mere title. The wives and daughters naturally make much of their position, and it is impossible to act against those whose champagne you drink, and who bring yourself and your people into society. The wily Patronage Secretary knows all this, and he has all kinds of bait for all kinds of fish. The most troublesome is the Randall Leslie type of politician, who resembles the ferry-boat constructed to be always passing from one side to the other. In critical times, when parties are tolerably balanced, and a few votes might upset a Ministry, you require a Patronage Secretary, like Mr. Brand, of exquisite tact and skill. Just now they put up with Mr. Ayrton—Mr. Ayrton, who before now has been the solitary occupant of the Treasury Bench, and has pompously announced the intention of the Government, or what Gladstone, Ayrton, Lowe, and the rest of us mean to do! But any Patronage Secretary would do now, as a huge majority has swallowed Gladstone, and swallowed him whole.

The talk of Parliament reported in the papers is not the only, and often not the best talk in the House of Commons. An almost separate study of the lobby is required, not to mention tea-room, smoking-room, and other adjuncts in the House. Even while a debate is going on, if some pretentious bore is speaking, there is a tremendous buzz of conversation. The orator of the moment is using tremendous force of lung, thoroughly convinced of the importance of the subject

and his own ability in dealing with it. But he has not got the 'ear of the House,' and criticisms, inquiries, rumours, gossip, talk—often trenchant and witty enough prevail during his speech. Some such men may succeed in goading the House to fury, and then it becomes very like a bear-garden; or as the undergraduates' gallery at Commemoration what time a man with a white hat may have come in. If members choose to pull their hats right over their eyes, they may yell *crescendo* and *ad libitum*, and Mr. Speaker will be unable to detect the ringleaders. He will, however, speaker-like, call out 'Order, order.' Reader, that 'order, order' of the Speaker seems so very simple, but, in fact, it is a very important, and perhaps mysterious part of the British Constitution. It is calculated by good judges that it takes a Speaker just five years to acquire the art. Though Mr. Denison had been in the House just thirty-five years before he became Speaker, yet he has never approximately realised the ideal of that great office as set forth by Mr. Shaw Le Fevre, Viscount Eversley. But then Lord Eversley was a model Speaker, to be contemplated by all other succeeding Speakers with what Gibbon calls 'an admiring despair.' The rumour now is, that Mr. Denison is turning over in his own mind whether he had not better resign the Speakership some early session, and that same rumour somewhat confidently assigns Mr. Brand as his successor. The chat, broken off by the rising of some eminent man who calms the billows like Aeolus, or the subsidence into his boots of the obnoxious one, is resumed in the library or the smoking-room. The House is really the best club in London, and the gossip of clubs, which really indicate the formation and current of the best political opinion in London, is eagerly watched by politicians and journalists. A great deal of talk is done in the lobby, which is an institution in itself. Members abuse the lobby, and on busy nights the police clear it, but it is indispensable. The knowing

members carefully cement their political ties. How speedily the honourable member recognises that most respectable alderman or common councilman who proposed or seconded his nomination at the last election! It is little that he should write him an order. He will see if the Speaker will find room for him in the Speaker's gallery, or will send the Sergeant-at-arms to give him a place underneath amid peers or illustrious strangers. He will probably, if a wise man, ask his influential friend to feed with him at his club. One very pleasant feature that characterizes the House is the hearty and strong friendships that is always gradually growing up between members. It is impossible to be sitting on the same benches, attending to the same topics, dwelling in constant companionship, without a kindly feeling being created. This feeling is perhaps too limited and restricted to those of kindred political sympathies; but still the place of each eminent man is soon assigned and respected; and as from time to time some member drops in the ranks, or perhaps some great one whose presence and brain have long commanded the House passes away, one becomes more and more conscious of the kindly, thorough, and even chivalrous feeling which is the happiest feature of the inner life of the House of Commons.

We have already spoken of the possible troubles that belong to the Cabinet. Triumvirates, like coalitions, are not favourites in history. The captain and crew hardly prosper when the lieutenants have such opinions of each other as Mr. Lowe has of Mr. Bright and Mr. Bright has of Mr. Lowe. But beyond this we believe that there is a section of the Cabinet and of the party who are in heart disloyal to Mr. Gladstone, and would prefer other guidance. He is a man of scholarship and refinement, but scholarship and refinement are repulsive to minds of the revolutionary caste. He is an eminently religious man—religious according to an unpopular high church groove, and he gets twitted with his 'ecclesiastical hu-

mility,' and many of his party are men of free thought in religion as well as free lances in politics and letters. We should side with Mr. Gladstone against mutineers, but the mutiny is there, and will rear its head if ever the chance should come. The Irish question is still the rock ahead. The church question, compared with the land question, is 'as moonlight unto sunlight and as water unto wine.' And, to whisper such a supposition with bated breath, suppose Mr. Gladstone were to disappear from the political scene. He was dreadfully ill towards the end of the session, and although the perseverance of Mr. Bruce pushed on the business of the House, it is not to be expected that he would be an efficient leader. Nothing is more unlikely than Mr. Gladstone's eclipse, but every lawyer, politician, historian, has to study contingencies. What, then, would be the political situation—where would be the arrayed phalanx of the unparalleled majority? Would Mr. Lowe and Mr. Bright serve harmoniously under Lord Granville? But we are now concerned with the aspect of the last session, and not with speculation respecting the next. In its concluding days that session exhibited some remarkable phenomena in the intense vitality of discussion maintained to the very last. Although the Irish Church Bill has received the royal assent, though the twelfth of August came nearer and nearer, though Mr. Gladstone was absent amid the hills and woods of Chislehurst, it seemed that the lust for talk was absolutely insatiable. The House did not get on quite well without its leader. Strange as it may seem, Mr. Gladstone has for a time thoroughly cemented the party. The head thrown back and directed towards the ceiling, that stands duty for while it shuts out heaven; the clear, keen, trenchant voice that has about it a witchery and a force possessed by no other man, were sadly missed by the ministerial horde. While the weather grew hotter and hotter; when hardly a breeze stirring on the terrace of the Thames; when members plunged out of the House

to partake of iced drinks, there were members who talked and talked away, and would not be ill content were the session prolonged to Christmas. Old members of the House who have passed the best of their days there, who were so acclimated that the House to them had become a second nature, seem perhaps restive and unhappy for the last month or two, missing the excitement of the early summer, the crowded house, the cross-fire of interpellations when the cartel of defiance had been honourably sent by the querist, and the question had its interest; the yeiling cheers and the vociferous 'Oh, Oh's,' the shouts and cries of 'Division' when outlying members had madly to race into the House; but the young members have kept up the game cheerily to the very last, as unwilling to renounce speechifying as young ladies who are reluctant to give over their croquet, and even insist that lights should be brought out upon the lawn.

Considering that there were some hundred new members in the House, it becomes an anxious inquiry how far there is any genuine oratorical talent to be found there. Such is Mr. Harcourt, the 'Historicus' of the 'Times,' who must not, however, assume that he knows so very much and that everybody else knows so very little. Mr. Jessel is a hard-

headed, powerful lawyer, whom his friends speak of as a very possible Chancellor of the future. These are the lawyers—a very acceptable reinforcement to the Liberals, who generally do not boast many adherents of a class naturally conservative. Then we have Sir Charles Dilke, a supporter of the *littérateur* kind. Mr. Gladstone has shown great sagacity in bringing forward Mr. Baxter, the hard-headed member for Montrose. The Conservative recruits must be spoken of elsewhere. We shall see how Mr. Gladstone's skilled eye will detect dormant talent and train up his disciples in the ways of statesmanship. It is always the kindly and honourable office of a Premier to act as a nursing mother to rising political genius. Mr. Gladstone takes broader and more genial views than his austere master, Sir Robert Peel, who chilled the ardent spirits of the 'Young England' party by advising them to 'stick to committees.' He has certainly no want of kindness and geniality towards young men. It is possible that, unknown to the ranks, there lurks some future Premier, at present inglorious, mute, to shine forth in the future, as the vessel of the state, unloosed from ancient moorings, dips into the future and passes away towards new skies studded by new constellations.

THE REGATTA WEEK AT RYDE.

'A DISTINCT success.' That, we believe, was the social verdict unanimously given, without a single dissentient voice *à propos* of the delightful seven days as to which it is the purpose of this paper to say something. A success, in truth: why, where could you have found and realized all the elements of success, if not at the exquisite little watering-place whither the centrifugal force that was strong upon us compelled us to retreat, just as London was becoming intolerable, and August was fairly entering upon the second week of its exist-

ence. Weather, that, on the whole—in a matter so delicate it is well to speak *en masse*—that behaved itself admirably: a sun seasonably fervid, with just enough of wind to blow any superfluous heat away; breezes of exquisite softness, yet, withal, invigorating in their influence; company well-selected and agreeably assimilative; delicious scenery, and all those human accompaniments, without which, we are free to confess—we beg pardon for introducing parliamentary phraseology upon our readers in the middle of the long vacation—good

scenery goes an uncommonly short way; flirts and flirtations, dancing and dinners, luncheons on board the 'Sea Foam,' and champagne breakfasts on the 'Firefly'—well, are not these enough to constitute an extremely promising programme for the enjoyment one of brief week? Do you care for the softly attractive side of what one Mr. Russell has termed 'a life on the ocean wave'—for *déjeuners* of altogether unimpeachable description, served by skilled menials beneath a judicious awning, your good ship speeding her way the while at the rate of nine knots an hour through the blue waters of the Solent, to say nothing of accessories galore in the way of feminine smiles, laughter, melody, and what not else? if so, by all means pass the Regatta week at Ryde. Or possibly you incline to Dr. Johnson's opinion, and are disposed to think that, even given these conditions of perfection, a ship is little better than a prison with a chance of being drowned in it, to say nothing of realizing the pangs of nausea? Even then, we repeat, go to Ryde. Of course when there you must be nautical or you are nothing—must be great upon all matters touching the *veti-volum mare*—must be able to criticise the foresail of this yacht and the mainsail of that—must have some notion of what a flying-jib really means—and must be able to pass off-hand a judgment into which the terms breadth of bar and length of beam are introduced. But then what on earth is to prevent you doing all this as well on shore as at sea? Distance, in such cases, not merely enhances the beauty of the view, but replenishes marvellously your marine vocabulary.

To a certain extent this is possible at all seaside places. At Ryde, however, a peculiarly happy kind of compromise between the romantic perils of a sea life and the prosaic security of a shore one has been devised; and this compromise, what is it but Ryde Pier? When the tide is 'up, and you are projected by the agency of a ten minutes' walk 'far amid the melancholy main'—when you look back and see the

inglorious land retreating in the distance—or when you look forward upon the outspread main, you feel that you are a kind of amphibious creature, and are possessed by an influence which makes you throw forth wildly a whole string of nautical utterances of which the most seasoned tar might be not ashamed. You have combined in a marvellous degree the advantages of both situations, and in a different sense from that in which the poet first used the expression, you feel that you have 'one foot on shore, one foot on sea.' You have the idea of the brine without the gushing motion of the waves: there are still craft in number numberless on each side of you: wavelets of all sizes are moored within a stone's throw: you can distinctly discern the ungainly efforts made by the amateur sailors to preserve their sea-legs—can deride their failures, and laugh at their misfortunes. Is not this, we ask, the very acme of that species of enjoyment—rather uncharitable we admit, in its way—hinted at by Lucretius, and epitomized in the well-worn phrase *Suavis mari magno?* If, then, you go to Ryde—and by all means go there when the regatta week of 1870 comes round—and if, at the same time, you have a misgiving that your ambition to realize the charms of 'a home on the ocean wave, &c.,' in the shape of a brief cruise in an exceedingly comfortable schooner yacht does in reality outstrip your discretion, walk to the pier-head, and shut your eyes to the fact that there is a wooden isthmus connecting you with the land, and revel in the idea that you are emulating the watery freedom of the albatross.

A distinct advantage this possessed by Ryde Pier, but by no means the only advantage or the sole attraction. Fashion, beauty, flirtation, gossip, scandal, costumes of myriad orders, yachtmen and yachtswomen of every conceivable gradation, nautical attire of all degrees of eccentricity, curious persons, people you meet everywhere, and people you have never met before, the belles of last season, and those who were belles once but

many seasons ago; damsels fresh and faded; widows, whose garb betokens every grade of not irredeemable grief; the inevitable Russian count, whose wealth is fabulous; the hero of the last divorce case, and the heroine of the last elopement—*que voudre vous?* Go to the pier at Ryde and you have them all. Indeed, for all practical purposes Ryde and the pier are convertible terms, just as for a considerable section of humanity London means nothing more than the few square miles comprised within the precincts of Belgravia and Mayfair. The pier at Ryde is, in fact, the alpha and omega of existence at Ryde—the centre of the social system of the place—the *terminus ad quo* and the *terminus ad quem* of all our movements—the beginning, middle, and end, of our occupation. That promenade on the pier-head, extending over a space of some two hundred feet—it is the main business of our lives. We lounge there after breakfast, parade there after lunch, and, if you like it, flirt there, though there is no immutably-fixed and definitely-assigned period of the day for this occupation after dinner.

Time, 4 P.M.: the admirable band of which the 101st Regiment, quartered over at Southsea, boasts, in full play: a breezy afternoon—the wind just enough to freshen, but not disagreeably to agitate: a regatta-day of course; the competing yachts every moment expected to make their appearance round the eastern headland—the race has been round the island. Given these conditions, and you have on Ryde Pier a sight and an assemblage well worth a few minutes' study. If you please we will lounge up and down, investigate faces, scrutinize dresses, observe character, and pass our remarks. A monotonous occupation rather, this habitual walking up and down? Monotonous, in truth, it would be, were it not that the mass of animation crowded together upon this wooden platform imparts to the whole a variety full of flavour and piquancy. Besides, it must be confessed that there is a certain indispensable air of romance

in the situation. On one side of you are the blue waters of the Solent flecked with dainty yachts of all sizes, laughing that mummable laughter which gladdened the soul of the old Greek poet—whitened here and there by the foam that the wavelets toss as seeds their mane. On the other you have a fair stretch of ten miles of the richly-wooded land-line of the island. Is that not enough? Well, then, better even, in your opinion, than the soundless music of the spheres, you have by way of accompaniment the strains of the band, and you can gaze upon as fair a sight, whether in the shape of animate or inanimate nature, as you could well wish, the while that your ears are delighted with the Shadow Song in 'Faust,' or the last new selection from—should you wish a merrier strain—from Offenbach's 'Barbe Bleue.' The pace—we use the word in its literal and pedestrian acceptation, without any undercurrent of moral significance—is slow: if 'tis motion 'tis scarcely walking; but seeing that we have crowded into a square surface of four hundred yards rather more than the same number of human beings, it would be wonderful were it otherwise. Ryde pier-head is a lounge rather than a promenade: you must fall in with the actions of the spot, and adapt yourself to the *genius loci*, if you wish to be here. Physically or morally there must be no traces of indecent haste about you: you must abandon for the time being all desire to get on, and must above everything beware of laying yourself open to the charge which the Sultan brought against the whole race of Englishmen—that of doing things in a hurry.

Lounge then with us, and you shall have your reward. What is the effect which the dresses have upon your optic nerves? They impress you as being clever photographs of kaleidoscopic hues, do they not? It occurs to you that you have before you the counterfeit presentment of all the myriad tints of the rainbow. Well, we are not surprised, for there is certainly a maximum of multiplicity

of colour in the matter of costume exhibited here in a minimum of space that is surprising. It may be questioned whether it is not the studiously *deçage* and natural toilette of the Englishwoman which is in reality, and upon a very slight amount of inspection, the most elaborately artificial. Here we are rather supposed to study nature; but if nature is, as it has been beautifully called by Sir T. Browne in his 'Religio Medici,' 'the art of God,' then nature in a lady's dress simply means the most consummate art of the dressmaker. However this may be, the feminine costumes visible on Ryde Pier this afternoon are a great success. *Simplex munditia* is not the phrase which we would apply to our Pyrrhas of to-day. A pretty woman is rendered ten times prettier by a pretty dress. To come back, however, to the original question—Who are here to-day? Yonder sits Miss Garrula Withers, a lady whom you probably know by reputation as having in her day made more mischief than probably any other wicked being of her sex. However, as you have learnt by this time that reserve and reticence which constitute one of the great moral lessons of life, and as you feel anxious to have the benefit of the experience of the knowledge of men, women, and things which that garrulous old lady—old, we beg her pardon, why it is whispered that Miss G. Withers is on the look-out for an eligible opportunity for changing her patronymic—devotes her whole existence to accumulating, we will stroll in her direction and hear what she has to say.

Remark to Miss Withers that that young lady with the glorious masses of golden hair, and the deep dark-blue eyes, that stand out in brilliant relief against a countenance fair as ever was that of the tinted Venus, is not devoid of natural charms, and this good lady will be obliging enough to sneer at your taste. 'Call her pretty?' Really I am surprised. She is so horribly insipid to my eye, a kind of milk-and-water girl; and then look at her dress.

It's not silk, I assure you; it's only camelot, and abominably made into the bargain.' And then with a little more of that systematic *ignoratio cluchi* which is the main characteristic of women's criticism upon each other, Miss Withers will go on to tell you that though her name is Proudaire she is not the least relation to the Proudaires of Cockalorum, but is in reality the daughter of a retired cheesemonger. 'And I've no doubt,' continues this charmingly charitable lady, 'that she thinks a great deal of herself because she is talking to Captain Fryers. I wonder, by-the-by, whether she knows that Captain Fryers is a married man, though he does send his wife and children every year to Boulogne and comes to Ryde with that horrid little—. Well, well,' and Miss Garrula Withers gives us an anxious nod. But it matters little what may be the subject-matter of Miss Withers's criticisms. From costume to character it is all conceived in the same vein. If you want to be disillusioned as regards either, Miss Withers is emphatically the person to do it. A little of this sort of thing goes a long way, and as you do not particularly care for being told on what shamefully economical principles Mrs. Blank's dress is made, or who Miss Blogg's great-great-grandfather was, or why Mrs. Chicken is at Ryde by herself this year, you make your bow and pass on.

Gossip, that of course there is, for gossip is the inseparable accident of a crowd such as we have to-day on Ryde Pier. You may hear strange things about divers people—will probably be told, as a young gentleman passes close to you in company with a young lady at his arm, that the name of the knight is Plunger—Frank Plunger—late of the Dancing Buffs, who was obliged to sell out in consequence of financial difficulties, and who has lately done quite the cleverest thing which he was ever guilty of perpetrating in his life, in persuading Miss Minto, who it is reported has, or will have immediately, something like fifteen thousand a year in her own right, to

elope with him. The result is, that our friend Frank, whom only six months ago they declared would never be able to show up again, is here to-day infinitely more prosperous than ever. He has taken that delicious villa which you see yonder to the westward, nestling amid the trees that grow down to the water's edge, for a month; and there out at anchor is moored his recently-purchased yacht, the 'Sea Foam.' Of course the fact of the elopement and everything else connected with it are perfectly well known to a majority of those who promenade up and down the pier-head this afternoon, and the consequence is that the newly and furtively married pair are decidedly amongst the heroes and heroines of the situation. *Di majores et minores audite!* Alas! the morality of this young England of ours! There is little Faddle, whom only three years ago you had to tip when he called on you before his return to Eton from the holidays, languidly propounding to some equally beardless boy this alarming sentiment, gazing the while after the receding forms of Mr. and Mrs. Plunger: 'Gad! in my opinion the next best thing you can do to running off with a married woman, and leaving the disconsolate husband to tear his hair, is to bolt with an heiress.' Boy, what would thy father, the Rev. Septimus Faddle, and thy mother, who is at this moment engaged in the study of pinching economy that thou mayest have thy allowance paid regularly, say to these new-fangled ethics developed by *imberbes* subs. across the mess-room table?

Omitting the variously composed crowd in no way peculiar to Ryde, let us glance at some of what we may call the idiosyncrasies of the pier, and gaze upon the spectacle of the yachtsmen of the period. You have them here of all descriptions and of all appearances. We have not the slightest idea of the name of that gentleman yonder, but he is a fair specimen of at least one order of the amateur votaries of Nereus, Thetis, and the whole choir of the Oceanides. A fearfully and wonderfully composed thing is

the sum total of his costume, decidedly 'fancy' in its conception if unquestionably dazzling in its effects. There is a lack of 'business' look about it which at once inspires you with a conviction that his nautical experiences are limited to his pier parades. The very breezy straw hat, encircled by the delicate and multi-coloured riband, the jacket of exquisite texture, the perfect fit of the dainty glove—all these naturally give you the impression that their possessor is intended for land display rather than for sea-service. Contrast with him the knots of men clad in complete suits of dark-blue serge, covered as to their heads with the hat of oilskin, the comfortable rather than the showy wide-awake, and the roughly-plaited straw, who are collected here and there along the pier, discussing matters with each other, or more generally with some of those fair demoiselles to whom we have already alluded. Members of the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, most of whom are the possessors of barques that lie beyond in the offing, and who are perfect repositoires of nautical and yachting information on all possible points. They are not racing to-day, but they will be to-morrow in all probability. These are the great central attractions of the place, the great centre, too, of the flirting interest, we believe we ought to add. As they come for the most part to Ryde every year without fail as the regatta week comes round, it is not wonderful if their information as regards the *personnel* of the company assembled on the pier is tolerably extensive. They will tell you at once which are the new faces, and which those of the old *habitués*. They know by heart the list of diplomatic mammas who repair to Ryde, to say nothing of most of the fashionable watering-places in England, with their marriageable daughters, or to an eligible matrimonial hunting ground during the course of this eventful week of the widows. Ryde Pier, as we shall presently show, is a great place for widows, who come hither for a similar purpose, and of all the other stock characters on

view. Flirtation! if it is ubiquitous, as it is on Ryde Pier, you get the very quintessence of the thing among these groups of members of the R. V. Y. C. There are flirts and flirts; but these gentlemen, we sadly fear, are altogether incorrigible. Yonder you see Mr. Lytelyoke talking to pretty Mrs. Agamos. Hoist up the danger signals, for danger is there. When Mrs. Agamos was still in possession of her maiden name Mr. Lytelyoke was a great flame of hers. Unfortunately—for we conceive it is unfortunate—they have met now for the first time since their marriage, and Mrs. Agamos is telling Mr. Lytelyoke the history of her married life. The history is not a happy one; but is it wise to make Percy Lytelyoke the depositary of such secrets? He may be an amusing companion, but a continental training has not sharpened his moral sense or elevated his ideas on the subject of the inviolable sanctity of the wedding tie. Is there not something suggestive in the tone in which our friend Percy informs his old love—for he thinks that he did love her—that he intends going for a cruise up the Mediterranean directly he can start; that the 'Nautilus' lies out there ready to take him at a moment's notice, and that he will go at once if—, and here Mr. Lytelyoke stops short and casts an eloquent glance upon Mrs. Agamos? Is there not something dangerous, too, very dangerous indeed, in the look of feverish longing which the lady gives as she gazes through eyes tear-dimmed upon the white silver sails of the 'Nautilus'—in the tone of anguish in which she says 'For God's sake, Percy, do not tempt me!'—in the hurried whisper that follows between them? What says, what thinks the world? Why, Bob Flutter, of the 999th, remarks to his friend, 'Gad, Lytelyoke's going it with his old flame. I'll take odds that the 'Nautilus' is not to-morrow this time where she is now!'

A decidedly dangerous specimen of a yachting flirtation this. As for what passes between Mrs. Sully, the widow of five years' standing, and Charles Chatbury yonder, that is

nothing. No doubt Charles goes a long way, calls her Julia, but then Mr. Chatbury has known her for some years, and Mrs. Sully is a born flirt. No more regular *habitude* at Ryde during the regatta week than Mrs. Sully. Hitherto her efforts have not been crowned with success. In vain in the sight of the wary bird has the matrimonial net been spread, for Mrs. Sully is still to be wooed and won. That, there are persons who will tell you on the pier to-day, is a thing that will never be done. 'By George!' is the verdict of the members of the R. V. Y. C. generally, 'the man who marries Mrs. Sully will have as much as he expects.' And indeed there is about the face of the lady in question a look which is what some people would call tigerish. It is emphatically a hard face; there is no play of sentiment about the mouth, and no touch of softness in the region of the eyes. Yet in spite of all this it may be questioned whether Mr. Chatbury does not at times exercise too far his prescriptive right as a privileged person. It is said, and probably with truth, that in spite of the badinage which passes between them, Mrs. Sully really entertains something like an affection for the gentleman who is talking to her now. At any rate, those who study Mrs. Sully's face will not fail to notice that there are minutes when, in spite of all her gaiety and heartless merriment, she so far forgets herself as to look intensely wretched—moments when, as you catch her profile, you see a look of desolate sadness overspread her countenance. It may be questioned whether there is anything more intensely melancholy in its way than the face of the hardened flirt as it looks at those times when the thought comes full upon her that her better days are over, and that as she saw herself reflected in the glass this morning she could no longer be blind to the fact that there were symptoms of age not to be concealed and no longer disguised.

There are, as we have said, flirts and flirts, flirtations and flirtations on this Ryde Pier: many of them

purely harmless and innocent. We draw, however, from the life; and the parts of Ryde flirtation during the regatta week which we have sketched are the most characteristic as they are also the most striking. If the reader who knows not the place wishes to convince himself or herself of the entire truth and special applicability of these remarks, let him or her repair thither next year at the season indicated.

There is a perfection of pleasure in the mere consciousness of existence apart from any result which that existence fulfils; and it is the superabundance of animation visible on every side of the Ryde Pier which constitutes its essential and main charm. Life on the land and life on the sea—motion everywhere, yet no commotion—that is what you have, and that is all you want. What the Ascot are to the Epsom races, what the lawn at Goodwood is to the heath at Newmarket, that the regatta week at Ryde is to the regatta weeks at other places. Above all things, we are select: we are exclusive: we are extremely decorous: and rigidly well bred. We flirt, it is true, perhaps more than is good for us: *cela va sans dire*; but then we all know the adage touching the stable-door and the limits of impunity assigned to different individuals. Now we are very fond of Brighton: and Brighton Pier on a fine December day is charming: but Ryde Pier during the regatta week is as different from the fashionable promenade of London-super-Mare as Monmouth is from Meudon. There is a marked deficiency in the company that congregates at the Isle of Wight watering-place of the flashy commercial element noticeable by the Sussex seaside metropolis. A Cockney in his noisy attire, his superabundance of heavy jewellery, his gorgeous neckcloth, and his resplendent shirt, is pleasantly conspicuous by his absence. You are

not perpetually haunted by visions of your tailor and your bootmaker, and you may take your walks abroad without running up at every corner against the same ruck of humanity that you meet with in Cheapside or the Strand. Nor is this the only attraction which Ryde in a general way presents. To come from London to Brighton is simply to shift your quarters from one town to another. It is true that in the latter place you have the sea substituted for the Thames, but here the difference ends. Now Ryde, town though it is, offers peculiar attractions in the way of change. If you wish to be fashionable, to see the sights which we have described, you can: if, on the other hand, you desire to infuse an element of rusticity into your daily life you can do that too. You have the free, open country within a few minutes' access; and such are the opportunities of the insular situation, the regattas themselves may be seen from elsewhere just as well as from the pier-head. Nay, whereas from the latter you are only able to view the start and finish, you may witness far more of the race itself in *transits* from less populous posts of observation. Take the train to Sandown, or Brading, and, given a fine afternoon, you shall enjoy as pretty a spectacle as you can desire. Climb up that breezy height, and there in the distance you shall spy the silver-canvassed fleet of yachts come into sight round the Marina headland. Or start a little earlier in the day, and you may make the cliffs that look down upon Freshwater Bay in ample time to witness the beautiful sight of the contending craft as they round the Needles. Regattas, indeed, are in themselves things of common occurrence enough: but regatta weeks with the attractions of the Ryde regatta week are exceptional institutions.



merely harmless and innocent. We draw, however, from the life, and the parts of Ryde flirtation during the regatta week which we have selected are the most characteristic as they are also the most striking. If the reader who knows not the place wishes to convince himself or herself of the entire truth and special applicability of these remarks, let him or her repair thither next year at the season indicated.

There is a portion of pleasure in the mere consciousness of existing apart from any result which that existence fulfills; and it is the superfluous lance of admiration visible on every side of the Ryde Pier which constitutes its essential and great charm. Life on the land and life on the sea—motion everywhere, and no immobility. That is what one sees, and that is what one feels. What the pleasure of the Ryde Pier is to the Ryde week, so the Pier is to the regatta week at Newhaven. That the regatta week at Ryde is to the regatta weeks at other towns. Above all things, we are sailors; we are seafarers; we are extremely dapper, and nicely well bred. We flirt, it is true, perhaps more than is good for us; we are *savages*; but then we all know the usage touching the stable-door and the limits of impunity assigned to different individuals. Now we are very fond of Brighton; and Brighton Pier on a fine December day is charming; but Ryde Pier during the regatta week it is as different from the fashionable promenade of London as the Pyramids of Gizeh are from the pyramids of Memphis. It is a marked distinction in the company that we gropingly explore of Wight watering-place of the more commercial element native to a Roman metropolis. The man in his noisy attire, his incongruous abundance of heavy jewellery, his gorgeous neckcloth, and his omnipotent shirt, is pleasantly conspicuous by his absence. You see

not perpetually harassed by the fashions of your tailor and your bootmaker, and you may take your ankles abroad without running up to it at every corner against the senselessness of humanity that you meet without in Chapside or the Strand. Nor is this the only attraction which Ryde has in a general way presents. To come from London to Brighton is simply to shift your quarters from one town to another. It is true that in the latter place you have the sea substituted for the Thames; but here the difference ends. Now Ryde, town though it is, offers peculiar attractions in the way of change. If you wish to be fashionable, to see the sights which we have described, you can; if, on the other hand, you desire to infuse an element of rusticity into your daily existence, you can do that too. You have the country within a few steps of your door.

Now, as regards the actual regatta, the regatta on land can only be seen from elsewhere not so well as from the pier-head. Nay, whereas from the latter you are only able to view the start and finish, you may witness far more of the race itself in *vicinity* from less populous points of observation. Take the train to Sandown, or Brading, and, given a fine afternoon, you shall enjoy as pretty a spectacle as you can desire. Climb up that breezy height, and there in the distance you shall spy the silver-cannibased fleet of yachts come into sight round the Marshes headland. Or take a walk along the shore, and you may make the shore and sea widen upon themselves for an ample time to witness the beautiful sight of the competing craft as they round the Needles. Regattas, indeed, are in themselves things of common occurrence enough; but regatta weeks with the attractions of the Ryde regatta week are exceptional institutions.





STUDIES FROM LIFE AT THE COURT OF ST. JAMES'S.

H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES.

Drawn by the late George H. Thomas. Engraved by William L. Thomas.